

**CRAFTING CULTURE: SCRAPBOOKING AND THE LIVES OF WOMEN**

**BY**

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**DISSERTATION**

**Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology  
in the Graduate College of the  
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2006**

**Urbana, Illinois**

UMI Number: 3242838

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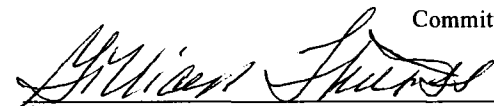


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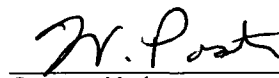


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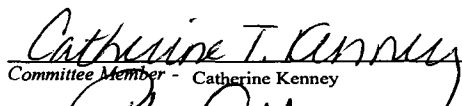
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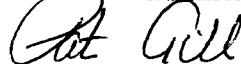
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## ABSTRACT

My dissertation examines the process of consumption and how women's relationships with business owners, with other women and with the products that they purchase, enhance commercial activity. Specifically I observe the scrapbooking industry (currently the fastest growing hobby and cottage industry in the United States) and how it utilizes ideologies of family and femininity to engage women's participation in the hobby. Scholars have analyzed women's organizations and businesses, women's relationships, and the meaning of domestic objects, but they have not tied these components into the larger practices of consumption. In my chapter on small business owners, I explore how women experience the contradictory qualities of doing gender publicly, of seamlessly integrating traditional femininity into the business world. This is a site where tradition joins with innovation and women combine their business responsibilities with their own needs under the guise of familial maintenance. In the chapter on the hobbyists, I analyze how important the hobbyists' relationships are with one another in engendering their interest in the hobby. This relationship maintenance is a form of kin work where women use their leisure time to preserve family and friendship networks which in turn supports a commercial industry. The next chapter explores how women negotiate marital power through the financial costs of their hobby. In the chapter on scrapbooks, I examine how the product and women's interpretations of it, sustain enthusiasts' participation in the hobby. Using Bourdieu's theory of family discourse, I explain how the scrapbook presents an idealized version of family life that women are consciously creating through their participation in the hobby. Together these chapters discuss the process of consumption where the individuals and the institution are highly interdependent.

*In memory of my grandmother, Jeanette Hardiek, and my grandfather, Robert Hardiek, who  
gave me so many happy memories*

*and*

*for my mother, Brenda Hanbury, and father, David Hanbury, who taught me the value of an  
education*

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This would not have been possible without the help of several talented and wonderful people. AC/DC and their album, *Back in Black*, Otis Redding and the song, “Try a Little Tenderness” and his version of “Change Gonna Come”, The Beatles, most notably for “Here Comes the Sun” and Elvis (TCB) who made my data collection and dissertation writing much more pleasant.

Thanks to several undergraduate students who aided in the transcription of my interviews: Divya Benjamin, Caitlin Bergo, Zakia Clayton, Brandon Evans, Michelle Johnson, Kate LaBrecque, April Makar, Danice Moore, Tran Nguyen, Gladys Valerio, Leah (Stoker) Wenger, and Jennifer Winkler.

Thanks to the University of Illinois Women’s Studies Department for awarding me a grant that facilitated my data collection and for supporting scholarship on topics of gender.

I also want to express my appreciation to consultants at the University of Illinois Writer’s Workshop. Helena, Hannah, Derek and Linda read several versions of these chapters and gave me insight into how to refine my writing style.

This work would not have been possible without the help and cooperation of many people involved in the scrapbooking industry or hobby. Jamie Houlihan, Rossie Renaker, Colleen Schultz and many other hobbyists and store owners made the research process much easier for me.

Thanks to Katie Kenney who provided important advice and support on many different versions of these chapters. Also thanks to Winifred Poster who encouraged this project from my first exploration into the scrapbooking culture. I also want to thank Pat Gill for aiding my prose and encouraging me to find my voice in my writing.

Gillian Stevens, an excellent adviser, is worthy of much thanks. She read several versions of this dissertation, knew when to give me advice, when to challenge me and provided me with the opportunity to explore this phenomenon.

Finally I would like to thank my parents, Brenda and David Hanbury. My dad always encouraged me to stay in school for as long as I could, though I don't think that he meant seven years past my undergraduate degree! I am most grateful for the love and support of my mother who unconditionally loved and believed in me, even when I didn't believe in myself.

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## CHAPTER 1:

### Introduction: On How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Scrapping



*A large group of women scrapbook together during a crop session.*

My project began on a Friday evening in February of 2002 when I accompanied a friend to a local church for an evening of crafts hosted by a company called Creative Memories. My friend had recently started making scrapbooks with her sister-in-law and she learned that the company sold specialty products for the hobby and hosted evenings where women could scrapbook together and learn the techniques of the hobby. As we entered the church basement Jill<sup>1</sup>, a grandmotherly, good natured woman introduced herself as a Creative Memories consultant and she informed us that for five dollars per person we would get unlimited snacks, use of numerous scrapbooking tools and the chance to enter a drawing to win more scrapbooking items. I took a seat at a folding table full of women who were looking through family photos of weddings, their child's first day of school and joyous family birthday parties. When I looked around the table I was amazed at the beauty and intricacy of many of the pages that the participants had created. As I sat down, I introduced myself as a new scrapbooker and found that many of the women were eager to give me starting tips and advice. Over the course of the evening we were occasionally given an informal presentation on some of the new products that the company offered.

Because I was new to the hobby I had a hard time completing the starter scrapbook pages that I set out to do, so I passed time by walking around the room and looking at the various pages that the women made. As I looked around at the tables full of hobbyists, I realized that women were participating in a seemingly mundane activity that had vast social and cultural implications. The first startling observation that I made on that night was that all of the women in this scrapbooking group were white and middle-class. I knew that I had to find out if this was typical of these scrapbooking groups and why they may be homogenous. As I overheard and took part in

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<sup>1</sup> All names have been changed.

conversations between groups of women I realized that they were also using this time as a form of female bonding and socialization. Topics of conversation focused on jobs, husbands, children, illness, infertility and money problems. On my first night of observation it appeared that the space created by this hobby acted as an empowering activity for women and a way for them to address some of their personal issues while reinforcing their roles as female family members. I also realized that someone was making a lot of money from the time that women were spending together and the supplies that women were using in order to create their scrapbooks. When I left at midnight I thought that I had stumbled onto a crafting subculture and I knew that I had to further investigate this phenomenon.

After my first experience with the scrapbooking phenomenon, I had to return to the environment and experience the scrapbooking phenomenon as a participant observer and researcher. The hobby appealed to me on a personal level. There was something empowering about seeing women create scrapbooks and there was something exciting about the prospect of taking my own pictures and turning them into beautiful scrapbooks. Four years later, I have attended hundreds of hours of scrapbooking sessions, watched scrapbooking programs on QVC and PBS, purchased the tools necessary for scrapbooking and completed several scrapbooks of my own and as gifts for friends and family members. During this time I immersed myself in this hobby subculture and became an expert on how the scrapbooking industry, the scrapbooking small business entrepreneurs and the hobby enthusiasts interacted with one another. Two of my early goals as a researcher were to understand how the crafting culture engages the individual and the multiple levels of consumption that intersect within the hobby. I examined this phenomenon on multiple levels including how the industry operates, the social networks of the hobby enthusiasts and how the discourse that they create can interact with one another.

## *History*

A brief history of the birth of the hobby and hobby industry is necessary in order to understand the current status of the scrapbooking industry. The popularity of hobbies grew out of cultural and economic conditions that supported work and consumption. Gelber (1996) explains that the hobby was aligned with the Puritan work ethic, an ideology that supported industrialization during the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Puritan work ethic views idleness as sinful and the industrial sector experienced increased worker productivity because of this belief. The schedule of industrial labor, however, left many middle-class and working-class men and women with free time so workers used hobbies as a way to productively fill their free time. The wealthy status of some families also left men and women with a considerable amount of free time. Hobbies such as sewing, woodworking, collecting and crafts, were one way that men and women could fill their free time in a socially acceptable manner. Gelber (1996) also demonstrates that hobbies supported industrial capitalism because they created markets for goods. This mostly occurred through hobbies that involved collecting objects; however, many craft hobbies also required the purchase of some type of materials.

The growth of early scrapbooking closely followed the rise of the hobby. According to Fleischman (1992), scrapbooking originated during the 18<sup>th</sup> century when women from wealthy backgrounds copied verse and painted watercolors in small journals. Eventually changes in the paper and printing industry popularized the practice of collecting colored paper in small books. This process was known as scrapbooking. Fleischman (1992) describes how this hobby eventually caught on with the middle class:

Scrapbooking became democratic in the 1860s, when chromolithography, die cutting and embossing unleashed a flood of cheap, brightly colored scrap. Some scrap was given

away to promote soap and cigars; some, “real scrap”, was sold directly for scrapbooking, which became a mania among women and girls. (p. 82)

Fleischman’s observation mirrors my research that early scrapbooks were used for collecting memorabilia and beautiful pieces of paper. Early scrapbooks did not contain the journal entries that are popular with modern scrapbooks. Later scrapbooks evolved into a hybrid of material that the hobbyist wanted to preserve and the memories that the hobbyist recorded.

At the start of the first wave of scrapbooking, the hobby was primarily popular among wealthy women. Several scholars have discussed the scrapbooks of women in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Buckler 1991; Buckler and Leeper 1991; Motz 1989; Smith 1993; Tucker 1997). They explained that scrapbooks served as a medium in which women addressed issues such as marriage, family, politics and religion. The scrapbooks also allowed women a space where they provided their view of life through their own unique editorial process. As I discovered with my field research on modern scrapbookers, early scrapbookers had a voice in their scrapbooks; however, it was often anchored to traditional values of femininity and family.

While the majority of research in this area examines wealthy educated women, there is some evidence that scrapbooking also appealed to uneducated poor women as well. While wealthy educated women would record poems or brief diary entries into their scrapbooks, women did not need to be literate to participate in the hobby. Gilbert (1968) wrote of the famous former slave, Sojourner Truth’s scrapbook which was known as her *Book of Life*. Although she could not read, Sojourner Truth was known to use her scrapbook as a way to record her actions and the important events of her time. Cheap materials and the ease of participating in the hobby made it appealing and accessible to different groups of women<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> While Sojourner Truth’s scrapbook has been discussed by scholars, discourse analysis of the scrapbooks of poor women and women of color is lacking.

Although the practice of scrapbooking never entirely ceased, in recent years scrapbooking has enjoyed a renaissance in the United States and in some other parts of the world. The widespread popular nature of scrapbooking has a social impact on the lives of women and their families. Scrapbooking is an activity that women participate in as a social activity. Businesses and organizations sponsor nights when women gather to participate in the hobby. As I discovered on my initial experience with the scrapbooking culture, an evening of scrapbooking involves more than just participating in the hobby. Typically, an evening of scrapbooking includes some refreshments and snacks, games with small prizes, and a lot of socializing and bonding. The social aspect of scrapbooking is reinforced through these regular scrapbooking evenings when hobbyists form lasting friendships. Scrapbookers, the term used to describe scrapbook hobby enthusiasts, may scrapbook on their own, take classes or participate in “crop sessions”, which are a time when scrapbookers gather to work on their projects together and share their materials.

Modern scrapbooks have changed from the books that women used to record small diary entries and collections of family and consumer memorabilia into records of family life. The modern scrapbook is an embellished photo album that is like a diary in nature. The pages of the scrapbook have a uniform appearance with several pictures, a headline, embellishments such as stickers and beads, and a journal entry that summarizes the events depicted in the photographs. Scrapbooking is so popular that Neff (2003) reports that 20% of households in the United States have scrapbooks. Clearly, the modern form of scrapbooking has an impact on many families throughout the United States.

Scrapbooking is not only a cultural phenomenon: it also has also had a large economic impact. One writer for *Time* reported that “The Hobby Industry Association estimates that more



than \$300 million was spent on scrapbooks last year, up from about \$200 million in 1997” (Labi 2000). According to the Hobby Industry website, scrapbooking is the third most popular hobby among Americans and it is also the fastest growing hobby among Americans. Current estimates place about \$2.5 billion dollars in merchandise and assets within the industry (Ethridge 2003). The popularity of this hobby has also supported a wealth of small businesses which specifically sell scrapbooking materials and offer classes on scrapbooking techniques. The Hobby Industry Association estimates that there are 2,500 scrapbooking stores in the United States (Ethridge 2003). A storefront, however, is not necessary in order to sell scrapbooking products and services. The company that was featured on my first night of scrapbooking, Creative Memories, sells scrapbooking materials in the same manner that Tupperware was originally sold, through a network of associates who hold parties. This company has grown to the extent that it holds large national conventions and has representatives in countries all over the world including Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Germany and the United Kingdom. These businesses are quite lucrative, and conservative reports estimate that scrapbookers spend about \$54 a year on their hobby while analysis of the spending habits of more dedicated enthusiasts estimate that they spend about \$1,564 on the hobby each year (Neff 2003). With the large number of households that have a scrapbook and the large economic impact of scrapbooking, it is easy to understand how studying this hobby provides insight into the consumption and leisure habits of American families.

### *Chapter preview*

I use the scrapbooking phenomenon as a lens into how leisure, consumption and family life interact. As the most popular hobby among women and as a hobby with a large economic impact, scrapbooking allows me to observe aspects of consumption and family life without intruding into households. Throughout this work I will demonstrate how consumption has an

impact on women's experiences with scrapbooking and how women influence the experience of consumption for other women. Together the discussion of all of these aspects of consumption illuminates women's participation in the practices of consumption. These practices are revealed as a series of relationships within a broader social landscape. The power of these relationships illustrates that consumption allows the consumer to control and create meaning in his or her life. Consumption, therefore, is not solely based on the desire to own materials and products but also the desire to control how one interprets his or her life. These relationships affect how the consumer views the product, how they relate to other hobbyists and family members, and business owners.

In the next chapter I discuss the qualitative methods that I used to carry out my research. I used participant observation as a way to understand how the activity of the scrapbooking and the culture of scrapbooking influenced hobbyists. Interviews with other hobbyists and with women who were involved in the commercial aspect of scrapbooking provided me with insight into how this industry balances ideologies about femininity and family with commercial activities. Finally a discourse analysis of hundreds of scrapbook pages gave me a picture of the product that women craft during their time in the hobby and how the product reflects their values and beliefs.

I begin my exploration into the practice of consumption by examining how women interact with the product that they create. Chapter 3 focuses on the product that women create as part of their participation in the scrapbooking hobby. Using Bourdieu's (1996) concept of family discourse I analyzed scrapbooks for the hobbyists' definitions of family. My analysis demonstrates that women use the ideologies about family that are present in the commercial culture of scrapbooking. The editorial process of scrapbooking also permitted these hobbyists to

control how their family record was portrayed. Analyzing the scrapbook for women's definitions of family aids the understanding of the role that consumption plays in interpreting family life.

The impact of the activities of consumption on family life is further explored in Chapter 4 which explains the scrapbookers and how their family and friendship relationships are influenced by their participation in the hobby. DiLeonardo's (1987/1998) concept of kin work where women use the hobby as a form of relationship maintenance is applied to hobbyists' participation. The chapter also describes how the end product of the scrapbook and the activity of scrapbooking binds and facilitates family relationships. Here kin work is intertwined with the commercial activity of scrapbooking. Consumption then plays a large role in how women manage and negotiate family relationships.

Part of the practice of consumption involves the economic cost of the activity and the influence it has on family relationships. Chapter 5 explores the power relationship between the scrapbookers and their husbands. It describes how hobbyists hide the economic costs of the activity from their husbands. This form of mild deception reveals that women acknowledge the power that their husbands have in marriage, however, they do not submit to this power. Instead women hide the money that they spend on the hobby as a form of resistance to this power. In this aspect of the practice of consumption the hobby becomes a field where power relationships between husbands and wives are played out.

The final aspect of the practices of consumption that I examine is the role that the business owners play in the experience of hobbyists. Chapter 6 explores how scrapbooking entrepreneurs experience traditional<sup>3</sup> ideas about femininity and utilize them in the operation of their businesses. This conceptualization provides a better understanding of women's entrepreneurship and how they influence female consumers' experience of the process of

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<sup>3</sup> I used traditional in the sense of how men and women are stereotypically portrayed in US culture.

consumption. Female entrepreneurs blend their roles as women and as business owners and do not experience an ideological disconnect in carrying out those roles. Traditionally feminine roles and practices then enhance the practice of consumption.

When I walked into that church basement four years ago, I had no idea how scrapbooking could provide insight into consumption, leisure and family life. Through the hundreds of hours that I have since spent in church basements, family owned scrapbook stores and women's homes, I discovered that consumption and the lives of women came together in a unique corporate space where leisure, commerce and family life were highly intertwined. The practice of consumption simultaneously reveals information about relationships and also establishes a series of relationships. Understanding these relationships allows us to comprehend how powerful consumption is to the operation of daily life.

## CHAPTER 2:

### Methods



**Oh the selection! Hundreds of pieces of colored and printed paper line the walls of scrapbook stores.**

Early one Saturday morning during my field research I was standing in the community center of a small rural town to take part in a power crop. This is a scrapbooking event where women gather to complete a themed scrapbook in a single morning. I had found out about the event in a local newspaper and had only had e-mail contact with the organizer. When I entered the room fifty women were scattered into groups around several tables. I immediately knew that I needed to find the organizer and I hoped that she would introduce me to some of the other women. I was out of luck. The organizer had a “paper emergency” and had to leave the community center. I was on my own with this one, so I walked up to a group of five women and introduced myself. It was clear that they already knew each other and I could not help but feel like the new kid at school. Usually I did not introduce myself to hobbyists as a graduate student who is studying scrapbooking for my dissertation, but I thought on this day that it would help me break the ice with the other hobbyists. While we were standing around waiting for the organizer to return with the paper that we needed to start the craft projects, I gave a basic explanation of my project to the hobbyists. “Oh, that’s nice” one of the hobbyists replied. Another one mentioned in utter amazement, “They let you do that?”. We continued on our conversation until one of the women asked what was clearly the most important question to this group. “Are you married?” I could feel all of their eyes on me and before I could answer she picked up my hand and held it in a similar fashion to the way that boxer’s arms are displayed after a bout. “No. No ring” she announced to the group. One of the other women quickly followed suit, “Do you have any children?”. I jumped to answer before they could hold anything else up. “No. I don’t have any children. Someday I would like to.” They all looked at me and nodded in agreement. One of the women lead over and stated, “You’re young. You still have time”.

My interaction with these women led me to make an important realization about my field research: even though I technically only lived a half an hour from the community center, I realized that I had entered another world. If I was to act as a participant observer with this group and eventually interview some of the women, it would require some creativity of my own. In order to connect with this group of women, and many of the other groups of scrapbook enthusiasts that I met, it required the use of intentional and genuine actions on my part.

As a researcher you do not enter the field once but on multiple occasions, each presenting its own set of circumstances and challenges. On each occasion you have to be prepared to deal with the privileges and limitations that are presented through your own set of circumstances. In this context, my marital status and childlessness limited my ability to gain acceptance from this group. I also knew that if I was going to understand the experience of other hobbyists then I would need to speak with them personally. As a feminist researcher, I wanted the women who I studied to have a voice in my work. Interpreting the materials that hobbyists created during the time that they spent crafting allowed me to understand yet another aspect of consumption practices.

In order to study the full extent of this phenomenon, I used several methods in my analysis. While I primarily studied the hobby and its impact on women in a moderately sized Midwestern town, I was also able to travel through urban and rural areas in the Midwest and to talk to many women in each of these environments. There were three main methods that I used during my data collection: participant observation, interviews and discourse analysis.

#### *Participant observation*

When I stumbled across the scrapbooking culture, I was interested in understanding the experience from the perspective of the hobbyist. In a hobby where the overwhelming majority of

the participants are women, I integrated a feminist framework in understanding the experiences of a group of women who are simultaneously privileged and oppressed. An analysis of women's mundane activities is a way to interpret their lives and acts as a porthole into larger social issues of gender and family. Bell (1993) uses this assumption when she discusses the need to integrate a feminist perspective in ethnographies that examines women. She writes that "I begin with the proposition that it is worth talking to women about their lives" (p. 30). Traditionally ethnography decentered women and framed their activities as unimportant or irrelevant to understanding a culture. My goal was make women who are involved in the scrapbooking culture the center of my fieldwork with the belief that focusing on their lives would illuminate social phenomena that highlighted the activities of women and men. My approach was in keeping with several feminist scholars. Olesen (2000) described "qualitative feminist research in its many variants, whether or not self-consciously defined as feminist, centers and makes problematic women's diverse situations as well as the institutions that frame those situations" (p. 216). When I entered the community I expected that the culture would provide a lens into the lives of women and how social institutions impact the lives of women.

I wanted to make sure that the hobbyist's voice was present in my observations and that the information that I collected honestly reflected the social phenomenon of scrapbooking. Several researchers believe that feminist field research allows the researcher to report and validate the experiences of women (Reinharz 1992; Stacey 1996). Reinharz illustrated how this methodology can be conceptualized. She wrote that "Feminist ethnography is consistent with three goals mentioned frequently by feminist researchers: (1) to document the lives and activities of women, (2) to understand the experience of women from their own point of view, and (3) to conceptualize women's behavior as an expression of social contexts" (p. 51). I kept these goals



in mind as my participant observation progressed and I realized over my time in the field that feminist fieldwork allowed me to interpret how women are simultaneously oppressed and privileged within social structures and gender roles. Over a four year period I joined several crop sessions in order to become a member of and exercise my membership in the scrapbooking community. My presence in four regular crop sessions allowed me to establish a rapport with the members of the scrapbooking community that I later interviewed.

My entrance into the community was fairly seamless. I regularly signed up for the crop sessions and expressed an interest in the hobby. When I started to attend a new crop session, I would introduce myself to the owner of the store and inform her of the general purpose of my study. I also asked her permission to conduct observations of the activities in her crop session and store. All of the owners agreed to let me conduct my participant observations and recruit women to interview. When I joined the hobbyists in the crop sessions, I would wait until they asked me what I did for a living and then I would explain that I was a graduate student who is studying scrapbooking. I was open to answer any questions that they had about my study, but I found that the hobbyists only wanted to know the premise of my project. I attribute my easy entrance into the scrapbooking community to several factors: my age because I fit into the age demographic of most scrapbook enthusiasts; my sex because the overwhelming majority of people who participate in scrapbooking are women<sup>4</sup>; my race because most of the hobbyists in the community that I studied are white<sup>5</sup>; and my class status because my manner of dress and speech reflected white middle class norms and behaviors.

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<sup>4</sup> The majority of the scrapbook store owners that I interviewed estimated that 99% of the hobbyists who entered their store were women. Out of a clientele that potentially served thousands of people, store owners could usually only name one or two men who regularly worked on their own scrapbooks.

<sup>5</sup> I did have the opportunity to interview several women of color, some of whom informed me that in areas where there is a large middle-class African-American population, there tended to be more African-American scrapbookers. I also spoke with one African-American woman who informed me that creating a scrapbook was part of her debutante training in her African-American sorority.

In instances in which I did not demographically mirror the majority of participants, I recruited informants. My informants filled my demographic gaps of being married and having children. I knew that it was important to have informants with these statuses after I attended my first few crop sessions, in which the majority of the hobbyists spent the evening discussing their husbands and children. The informants facilitated my connection with another segment of the scrapbooking population. My interaction with members of the community was tentative at first, which a number of researchers have identified as part of the process of participant observation. Angrosino and Mays de Perez (2000) note that “Interaction is always a tentative process that involves the continuous testing by all participants of the conceptions they have of the roles of others” (p. 683). I discovered that once I was known by the owners of the stores, then the hobbyists were comfortable with me. It was usually after a handful of crop sessions at a particular store that I was considered a regular.

Because many of the women that I interacted with were married<sup>6</sup> and I am not, I found it necessary to recruit four informants to gain special insight into the scrapbooking culture. Fontana and Frey (2000) discussed how an informant is helpful to a fieldworker, “The researcher must find an insider, a member of the group studied, who is willing to be an informant and act as a guide and translator of cultural mores and, at times, jargon or language” (p. 655). My informants were avid scrapbookers and two of them had good relationships with the owners of two of the stores in my participant observation. These women are hobby enthusiasts and they have acted as my informants on several occasions. I have four primary informants:

Samantha is a married mother of one girl who works in Human Resource Management. She was introduced to scrapbooking through her sister-in-law. She accompanied me on my initial

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<sup>6</sup> Most of the women in scrapbooking groups were married. Out of the 42 hobbyists that I interviewed 32 were married, 1 was engaged, 7 were single and 2 were divorced.

visit to a crop session when I decided to pursue this project. Samantha knew one of the owners of The Scrap Shack through her work in Factorytown. Her experience as a wife and mother allowed her to participate in many conversations with the other women in the crop sessions. Before the branch of The Scrap Shack opened, she would commute for an hour in order to participate in crop sessions. She also lived in Farmtown, and when The Scrap Shack 2 opened she spent more time there. Over the course of the last four years, we scrapbooked together fairly frequently.

I also became close to her other sister-in-law who is a married mother of one girl. She accompanied us to several crops, and she works as an academic advisor for a large Midwestern University. Over the course of time that she acted as an informant to me she explained several trends within the industry. She had traveled to several scrapbook stores in the Midwest and reported some of the industry differences to me.

One of my other informants is a married woman who is an engineer. Her non-traditional work schedule allowed her to travel to scrapbook stores with me during the week. She began scrapbooking after I started my field research but her close relationships with other scrapbookers at the Leftfield store were very helpful. She also scrapbooked during weekday hours, therefore, she got to know several different groups of women at one of the stores.

My final informant was a married mother of two teenage girls who worked as an administrative assistant. When I originally met her she was withdrawn about my idea to study the scrapbooking culture and she reluctantly agreed to an interview. Once I explained that the purpose of my study was to critique consumption and leisure, she became comfortable with the idea of an interview. I later learned that this was due to how personal the hobby was to her. During our interview she opened up to me on several very personal topics that related to her involvement in the hobby. It was an immediate bonding session and from then on, she was

determined to aid my research. She was very supportive of my project and would actively recruit women (without my asking) to interview. While I knew her for the last year of my field research, she provided me with information that allowed me to extend my knowledge of the community and establish credibility with other scrapbookers. As one of the most frequent regulars at one of the stores, the other hobbyists trusted her and looked to her to set an example. Her trust allowed me further entrance into the community and facilitated several interviews.

### Sites

As part of my field research I traveled to four area stores that sold scrapbook supplies and held crop sessions. The owners of each store knew that I was researching the hobby but they did not know the specifics of my study and they never asked, in part I believe because they were surprised that examining the industry and women's leisure was a legitimate area of study. They were all supportive and would refer me to other stores or store owners. Some of them even gave me old copies of newsletters or trade magazines. Two of the owners helped me recruit women to interview or would offer suggestions of women who had a unique interest in the hobby. During the four years that I spent in the field I found that every scrapbook store includes two major areas: the area where the merchandise is sold and the workshop area where hobbyists can gather for crop sessions or classes. Descriptions of each store and what makes them unique follow<sup>7</sup>.

### The Scrap Shack

The Scrap Shack is a store that two sisters originally opened in Factorytown, a moderately sized industrial city that is experiencing deindustrialization. Kay and Allison are the two sisters who run the store. Kay was a former stay-at-home mom before she owned the store. Allison had a job as a bookkeeper during the week and worked at the store on the weekends. Kay handled most of the daily operation of the store, while Allison managed the financial aspects of

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<sup>7</sup> All names of people, stores and locations have been changed.

owning the store. The store opened while Kay's daughter, Sylvia, was working on her business degree at the local university. Sylvia eventually became the manager of the store. The store also had a buyer and supervisor, Tina, who made all of the decisions about merchandise that the store carried and the classes that the store offered. Tina was indispensable to the store because of her knowledge of scrapbooking trends and techniques. These four women and several other part time employees made up the staff of The Scrap Shack. In Factorytown the store was a simple store front with a small workshop that held eight to ten people. The majority of the merchandise was displayed on the walls with a few shelves in the center of the floor. After a year in Factorytown, the owners decided to move the store to the larger town of Centerfield where they would have a larger storefront and a wealthier clientele. This store is where I began the bulk of my participant observation.

The Centerfield store has retail space and a large workshop where crop sessions are held. The Scrap Shack holds weekly crop sessions for twenty-five women. The crop sessions are very popular and tend to fill up the week before, which often leads to a waiting list of about five to ten people. The interior of the store is decorated with scrapbook pages made by the owners and employees. The decorating scheme is functional because it provides scrapbookers with ideas that they can use as templates for their own pages and it also showcases the products that the store sells. The store has a large customer base and its popularity drew women from communities in the surrounding area. Some women traveled from fifty miles away just to attend the crop sessions. This eventually allowed for the owners to create a branch store in a rural area.

### The Scrap Shack 2

The owners of Scrap Shack found that several of their customers were traveling from rural areas as far as fifty miles away in order to buy products and participate in crop sessions, so

in the fall of 2003 they opened a small branch store on the village square of Farmtown.

Farmtown is a predominantly agricultural community and the majority of the women who frequent the stores are from the small communities that surround Farmtown. The interior and products are similar to the Centerfield store. The store also has workshop space for crop sessions. The workshop space is almost identical to the Centerfield store with the exception of a computer that women can use for a small fee. The owners split their time between the two stores and eventually adjusted the hours of the Farmtown store to account for the limited amount of women who frequented the store during the week, therefore, they adopted an extended weekend schedule which allowed for hobbyists to frequent the store while keeping the cost of labor low.

### Scrapbook Wishes

Scrapbook Wishes is another store that is located in Centerfield. The store is owned by Karie, a married grandmother who also owned a glass maker's studio. Karie is a self-described "ex-hippie" who also worked for over twenty years as a labor union representative. She opened the store on a whim when she entered a scrapbook convention with her daughter. Karie makes all of the executive decisions for the store and she manages the day-to-day finances. She also has a host of female part-time employees whom she recruited from her customer base. Her employee turnover was very low and she usually only lost employees when they moved out of town or when they found full time employment.

The interior of Scrapbook Wishes is divided into several rooms. The largest room in the front of the store is the workshop area which holds about twenty to twenty-five women. The sale items are also located near the workshop area. The hallway that leads back to the retail section of the store is lined with page layout examples and explanations of the classes on scrapbooking techniques that the store offers. The retail space is divided into four rooms. The three smaller

rooms include a room that contains rubber stamps, a room that holds all of the stickers and a room that houses the albums. The large section of the retail space displays all of the paper and embellishments. The store contains a kitchen area which is open to hobbyists. The shelves in the kitchen are stocked with bulk food items including cookies, candy and cans of soup and the refrigerator is full of different kinds of cola.

The store holds crops every Friday and these are often “theme” crops such as potlucks or chocolate desserts. At one point in time the owner had a massage therapist come in to provide massage services to the clientele during the crops. Karie is also very involved in the daily operation of the store and she spends little time away from it. I ran into her once at a local grocery store where she was buying kitchen and bathroom supplies for the store. After a congenial fifteen minute conversation she told me that she would have to return to the store because the hour that she spent shopping and talking to me marked one of the longest periods of time that she had left the store under an employee’s management.

### Croppin’ Fever

The final store in which I conducted my participant observation was in a craft mall that is located in Leftfield. The store is owned by a mother and two daughters who are conservative Christians. The mother told me during one of my initial visits that god had visited her through prayer and instructed her to open a scrapbook store. She believed that it was her mission to bring scrapbooking to the community. She often used the store to promote her religious community, celebrating religious holidays and family events in the store’s workshop area. Her daughters worked during hours that their children were in school or on days that their husbands could watch them. The store was also staffed by several part time female employees, including the owner’s mother who was in her eighties.

This store is unique because it has the largest amount of retail and workshop space out of the four stores. The interior of the store displays fewer sample scrapbook pages than the other stores. Half of the store is set up like a traditional craft mall where potential entrepreneurs rent booths that display and sell their home made craft products (e.g. quilts, candles, dried floral arrangements). Croppin' Fever contains a kitchen area for patron's use, a playroom for customer's children with supervised and unsupervised hours and a lending library of scrapbooking periodicals. It is located off a major highway where the owners have placed two prominently displayed billboards. The billboards ensure a steady stream of customers. On my last visit, I noticed that the store played religious music during their crop sessions and placed "God bless America" seating cards on each table. The religious and political beliefs of the owners are also reflected in their merchandise, which is often Christian or patriotic in nature. This store is unique because it has the most technology available for patron's use, including a color copier, sticker making machines and cutting systems. During the crop sessions the owner arranges for pizza delivery, with the pizza available at cost to the patrons.

### Fieldwork

There are several important elements to conducting field work in the scrapbooking community. The first is the events where women gather to scrapbook together. I found that through participation in these events, membership in the scrapbooking community is established and exercised. Understanding trends within the industry was also important in keeping up to date with the scrapbooking community. Finally, there are several tools that scrapbooking members have that display community membership.



## Crop Sessions

Crop sessions are held at scrapbook stores on a weekly basis. Stores have a monthly schedule in which either Friday or Saturday is reserved for a crop session. The most popular times for crop sessions are Friday evenings from six to midnight and Saturday afternoons. The number of women who attend these sessions is dependent upon the workshop space and can vary from five in a small rural town, to forty in the craft mall space. There are also large scrapbooking conventions where hundreds of hobbyists crop at the same time.

I attended at least two crop sessions per month over a four year period. The frequency of my attendance varied depending on the time of year. Scrapbooking tends to be a seasonal hobby with heavy attendance in the fall and winter and light attendance during the summer months and over the winter holidays. At least one of my informants accompanied me on most occasions to each of the stores. When I participated in the crop sessions I worked on my own scrapbook and over time I completed five scrapbooks and kept two continuous scrapbooks. When my fellow scrapbookers discovered that I was writing my dissertation on scrapbooking, I told the women that my dissertation is on the scrapbooking phenomenon but I avoided going into detail so that they would not shape their behavior to match or contradict the purpose of my project. In the four years that I took part in these crop sessions I have never had anyone respond negatively to my project. In fact, all of the women that I met are quite excited to discover that there is academic merit to their hobby.

There is a routine to the crop sessions which I will briefly describe. If the session takes place in the evening, it usually starts around 6 p.m. and will last until midnight. Except for the Leftfield store, seating is on a first-come basis. Many groups of women will save seats for one another or claim entire tables for their friends and family so that they can sit together. The

atmosphere is casual and women are welcome to wander around the store over the course of the evening. Food is always an aspect of the crop session. Bowls of snacks are set out on every table and often the owners will organize food delivery or a potluck. Food is important not just for snacking on, but also because it enhances the communal nature of the crop session. Each seat also contains a tally sheet where hobbyists record the items that they have used over the course of the evening. The tally sheet is based on the honor system and it allows patrons to continually work on their projects without having to stop and pay for the item every time that they want to purchase something. This continual crafting also encourages crafters to spend more money over the course of one session. I observed several instances when women lost track of how much money they were spending and spent more than they originally intended. Patrons are expected to write down the store supplies that they use over the course of the evening. As the night comes to a close, women pay for the five dollar fee for the crop session and the cost of the items on the tally sheet. Stores also provide some type of discount, usually between ten and fifteen percent, for purchases made during the crop session.

### Media

In order to understand some of the craft trends in the scrapbooking industry I tried to regularly watch two television programs on scrapbooking. The first program is a weekly television show entitled, “Simply Scrapbooking” on the local Public Broadcasting Station (PBS). The half-hour program is hosted by several women who provide tips and ideas that enhance scrapbooks. The primary focus of the program is teaching women how to use the variety of scrapbooking tools that are available. The program even includes a segment on how women can use their computer to print out special papers or to find helpful hints on scrapbooking. The other program is an hour long QVC program, “Preserving the Past”, that sells scrapbooking supplies.

For the entire hour two women, one of whom is the editor of a major scrapbooking trade magazine, exhibit scrapbooking tools and materials that are for sale. As part of the sales routine they show personal scrapbook pages that they made with the featured products. They tend to demonstrate how the products work. However, they do not go into the detail of tool use that is the hallmark of the PBS program.

Every four months QVC holds a specialty craft day when craft products are highlighted. This is capped by the once-a-year celebration of National Scrapbook Day, which is celebrated the first Saturday in May. On the Friday eve of the crafting holiday, QVC hosts an all-day product showcase that is quite popular with the scrapbooking community. Companies sell exclusive products during this showcase. One of the women I interviewed explained that she and some of her friends took the day off from work in order to watch the program. Another one of the scrapbookers taped the program and watched it after work. Referencing these programs with the regular hobbyists helped to establish my credibility with other scrapbookers.

### Tools

Scrapbooking requires the use of specialized tools, and I discovered that your status as a novice scrapbooker was easily determined by the type and quantity of the tools that you carried with you. When I was first introduced to scrapbooking, several enthusiasts gave me an informal list of “starter supplies”. Besides photographs and an album, I needed a paper cutter, at least one type of acid free adhesive, acid and lignin free paper<sup>8</sup>, a few colored markers and a pencil. The starting scrapbooker can participate with the minimum amount of supplies, however, the most basic supplies will still cost a starting scrapbooker around fifty dollars. A hobbyist can use starter supplies for years but I found that all of the scrapbookers bought additional crafting materials.

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<sup>8</sup> Acid free and lignin free products ensured that the scrapbooks were of archival quality.

Scrapbooking can get expensive when hobbyists purchase specialized tools such as cutting systems or page embellishments which can cost between fifteen and two hundred dollars.

Scrapbooking is an expensive hobby so many women will share their specialized tools with one another in order to cut down on the costs of participating in the hobby. If a group of women are scrapbooking together it is perfectly acceptable to ask the group, “Does anyone have ....?” While sharing is an element of the social aspect of scrapbooking, it is also important to realize that scrapbooking is a hobby of purchasing material items. As I became more ingrained in the hobby, I acquired more products including stickers, several types of scissors, different forms of adhesives, paper punches, paper folders, stencils, and a sticker maker. Then, of course, I needed a place to put all of these supplies. The majority of the scrapbookers whom I have come into contact own the CropInStyle XXL which resembles a square piece of luggage with compartments and pockets that specifically fit scrapbooking materials. The CropInStyle XXL even has wheels and a collapsible handle that allows the scrapbooker to travel to crop sessions. These pieces of luggage are quite heavy, often weighing close to fifty pounds. When one of my informants was pregnant and was not allowed to lift over forty pounds, I routinely had to meet her at her car just to lift the tote out of her car. The luggage is so popular that I have found that it is an easy way to determine if a woman at the crop session is new to the hobby. The vast quantity and expense associated with the tools proves that scrapbooking is a commercial hobby where consumption practices have a large influence on the scrapbooking community.

While my tools as a scrapbook enthusiast assisted my membership in the scrapbooking community, my tools as a sociologist allowed me to conduct an in-depth study of the culture. During crop sessions, I kept a small spiral bound note-book next to my craft project. When I needed to take field notes it was easy to record them in this book. The notebook was also

inconspicuous because it was common for hobbyists to carry notebooks that outlined their plans for their scrapbooks. I also used a digital recorder for some crop sessions and my interviews. The small recorder produced digital audio files which I was able to store on my computer. This made referencing certain points in the audio file very easy. Finally I used a digital camera to take pictures of women during crop sessions, photograph store layouts and photograph scrapbook pages. The digital photographs provided a way to organize and analyze the content of the photos.



*One hobbyist's bags for hauling supplies*

### *Interviews*

Participant observation is an excellent method for understanding a culture and the experiences of the members of that culture. However, I realized that if I wanted to fully understand the impact of this phenomenon on the lives of women then I would have to speak with them about it. Interviewing scrapbooking enthusiasts would allow me access to thoughts and feelings that were not divulged during my participant observation. As Reinharz (1992) discussed, "interviewing offers researchers access to people's ideas, thoughts, and memories in

their own words rather than in the words of the researchers” (p. 19), therefore, if my research is to have a feminist agenda then I would need to allow the women that I study to have a voice within it. There were two primary groups of women that I interviewed: women who owned or worked in scrapbooking businesses and women who participated in the activity.

### Owners

In order to understand the experience of female business owners and managers in the scrapbooking industry, I interviewed 24 women who were involved with the industry. I contacted owners in several ways: through the suggestion of some of the scrapbookers that I interviewed, through local stores and through store listings in trade magazines. The majority of the owners consented to the interview after I made my primary request<sup>9</sup>. I attribute this to the culture of helpfulness that is one of the hallmarks of the scrapbooking culture. I met and interviewed all of the owners at their respective stores to get a feel for their environment and to observe how they interacted with customers and employees. I also interviewed two women who worked for direct selling organizations.

### Hobbyists

Understanding the experiences of women who participated in the hobby was important, so I recruited scrapbooking hobbyists. I met hobbyists in several ways: through the crop sessions that I attended as a participant observer, through the recommendation of other scrapbookers, and I met a few through the recommendation of people who knew friends or family members who scrapbooked. Participants that I met in the stores were those who attended crop sessions at a few local scrapbook stores, The Scrap Shack, The Scrap Shack 2, Scrapbook Wishes and Croppin’ Fever. The crop sessions provided easy access to a large group of people because many participants attend crop sessions with other regular scrapbookers. There are several groups of

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<sup>9</sup> In all of the inquiries of store owners that I made, I only received one rejection.

women who regularly attend crop sessions, and often if I could get one member of the group to agree to an interview then the others would consent as well.

I wanted to interview women with their scrapbooks present. If I could not do this during the crop session, then I arranged for a time to meet with the women outside of the crop session. The location depended on where the participant was comfortable discussing her scrapbook. Usually it was the participant's home, however, for some women who were home all day with children, they welcomed the opportunity to leave their home. I met women in a variety of places: some in their homes, some at scrapbook stores and some at local restaurants or coffee shops. I even met one hobbyist at a local gymnasium so that I could interview her during her daughter's gymnastics class.

In conducting my interviews, I practiced what Holstein and Gubrium (1995) refer to as active interviewing. They define this form of the method as, "a set of techniques for moving past the mere words and sentences exchanged in the interview process. To achieve this, the interviewer must establish a climate of mutual disclosure. The interview should be an occasion that displays the interviewer's willingness to share his or her own feelings and deepest thoughts" (p. 12). While I primarily focused on the experiences of the women that I interviewed I would not hesitate to share my own experiences with them. Before I began the formal section of the interview, I would explain that I was a scrapbooker. Demonstrating my membership in the scrapbooking culture appeared to make women less defensive about their involvement in the hobby. This was particularly important in a situation where I could potentially intimidate women with the focus of my study. I typically asked women at the end of the interview if they had any questions for me and we would often discuss my involvement in the hobby, my career and my personal life.

There were also times where I could not directly relate to their experiences. For example many of the women that I interviewed had children. When I was in situations like this, I would try to be supportive and empathize with their situation. In another situation, I had a hobbyist who described how isolated she felt when she started scrapbooking and who said she believed her isolation was due to her ethnicity. In instances like these, I focused on the voice of the interviewees so that my own standpoint would not lead me to misinterpret their experiences (Riessman 1987).

Interviewing is a research method that involves multiple stages. During the interview process, I followed Kvale's (1996) seven stages of interview investigation: thematizing, designing, interviewing, transcribing, analyzing, verifying and reporting. These stages allowed me to record, interpret and analyze the hundreds of hours of interviewing that I recorded. They also provided a framework for my experience as a researcher.

Kvale (1996) believes that the first step in the interview process begins at the thematizing stage. This stage involves deciding the group that you want to interview and the topics that you want to explore. I spent three years on my participant observation before I began the interview process. During this period of time, I realized that I wanted to find out more about the relationships that hobbyists had with business owners, with other hobbyists, with their family members, and with the end product that they created. Acting as a participant observer allowed me to uncover some parts of the culture that needed further exploration.

The design phase of the interview process is when the researcher formulates the questions for the interview. When I reached the design phase of the interview process, I began to formulate the questions that I wanted to ask the business owners and the questions that I wanted to ask the



hobbyists<sup>10</sup>. It was also at this point that I sought approval from the Institutional Review Board at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign so that I could proceed with my study in a manner that would follow the ethical standards for human subjects research outlined by the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

When I was established in an interview atmosphere, I sought to make the interview a conversation about a hobby that I assumed most hobbyists enjoyed. This followed the guidelines that Fontana and Frey outline for the interview atmosphere, “Traditionally, the researcher is involved in an informal conversation with the respondent, thus he or she must maintain a tone of ‘friendly’ chat while trying to remain close to the guidelines of the topic of inquiry he or she has in mind. The researcher begins by ‘breaking the ice’ with general questions and gradually moves on to more specific ones” (p. 660). I made sure that my interview agenda began with easy questions and built to the more difficult questions as the interview progressed. I also tried to invest my own identity into the interview process according to Oakley’s (1981) philosophy.

Some feminist researchers have critiqued the participatory model and its use of rapport (Bloom 1997; Reinharz 1993) as ignoring interviewee subjectivity. Lyons and Chipperfield (2000) critiqued the use of the participatory model of interviewing because they saw it as ignoring the power dynamics of the interview process. They write, “Our own experiences in employing the participatory model show that the continued centering of rapport as a key interview strategy ignores interviewee subjectivity and fails to recognize the essentially ‘constructed’ nature of the interview moment. We argue that the focus on rapport overlooks the interviewee’s own perceptions of what the interview is, and thus sidesteps issues of interviewee agency and control” (p. 35). In order to address the critics of the participatory model, I left several segments of the interview open where I asked participants how they felt about the

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<sup>10</sup> For a list of my interview questions please read Appendix A and Appendix B.

interview process and if they would like to add any questions or comments. I also made it clear at the start of the interview that they had the option to not answer any of the questions. My own experience was to integrate Cotterill's (1992) perspective that the interview is a fluid process where the balance of power continually shifts between the interviewer and participant.

While the interview is a technical process, it is easy to overlook the psychological impact that this process can have on the participants and researcher. The interview has a personal impact on its participants. The interview was often therapeutic for the women that I interviewed. I found that women often told me that the interview put them in a good mood or made them feel happy, in part because they were talking about something that they enjoyed doing. I noticed that this often transferred to me as well. When I listened to some of their stories and heard about how important the hobby was to them, it would put me in a different mindset, sometimes empowering, sometimes enlightening, and sometimes depressive. I experienced the latter when I sat and cried with a woman over an experience that she had with a death in her family and the scrapbook that she made of the memories of her deceased family member. On another occasion I went home and cried after one woman described the effects of the death of her baby on her family.

When I reached the transcription phase, I realized that I would need to have some help with the hundreds of hours of interviews that I recorded. I was fortunate enough to have undergraduates transcribe the interviews as part of an undergraduate research project. When the transcripts were complete, I read through each of them and integrated my field notes into the transcript. There were also portions of the transcript that I listened to and "cleaned up". One of the unexpected benefits of listening to the interviews after they were complete was that it allowed me to hone my interviewing skills. Some of the participant observations and all of the

interviews were audio taped. This form of discourse analysis allowed an interpretation of the data which presents a different representation of the participant. One of the advantages of a discourse analysis is what Flick (1999) describes, “They combine language analytic proceedings with analyses of processes of knowledge and constructions without restricting themselves to the formal aspects of linguistic presentations and processes” (p. 203). This process allows the researcher to find predominant themes in the transcripts without forcing them to fit into quantitative categories.

After the transcription phase was complete, I prepared for the analysis of the interview data. For Kvale the analysis begins during the interview session “when subjects describe their lived world during the interview” (p. 189). The subjects experience new meanings and discover new aspects of their relationships and their experiences. The interview is a world in and of itself that leads the participant to reframe their experiences, creating a new interpretation of the experience. Kvale then describes the role of the researcher in the analysis of the interview. “In a third step, the interviewer, during the interview, condenses and interprets the meaning of what the interviewee describes, and ‘sends’ the meaning back” (p. 189). Here the meaning is interpreted by the interviewer and is presented to the participant so that he or she can clarify this interpretation. This step also allows the balance of power to shift from the interviewer to the participant and allow for the participant’s perspective to be taken into account. My interview notes were an indispensable aspect of this part of the interview process. I used them to analyze my interviews while I was in the world of the interview. I would often interpret them to the women I was interviewing and would ask them to comment on my interpretation.

The fourth step is when the interviewer interprets the transcribed interview. I followed standards outlined by Miles and Huberman (1984; 1994). I carefully read each of the transcripts

several times and then looked for the themes that were apparent within the interviews. I recorded these themes in notes and outlines. I then used these themes to draw findings about the scrapbooking phenomenon and its impact on the lives of women.

Another important stage in the interview process is the re-interview. This involves reinterpreting to the participant either during or after the interview so that they can elaborate on their own statements. This protects the subjectivity of the participant and allows her another opportunity to provide her insight and voice to the research experience. While I never conducted any formal re-interviews, I had numerous post-interview discussions with many of the women that I interviewed. I noted any of these discussions that had implications for the formal interviews in my original interview notes.

The next step in the process of interviewing is verifying the findings. Kirk and Miller (1986) discuss the use of field notes as a way to verify findings. Once I reached this point, I compared the transcripts of my interviews with the field notes that I made during the interview. This step in the process supported my findings and enriched my transcripts. The final stage in the interview process is reporting the findings. During the writing process I discovered more about the interview experience and I was able to extend my findings to other interviews and experiences during my participant observation. During the reporting phase I also followed the American Sociological Association's style guidelines for reporting my findings.

### *Discourse Analysis*

The third method that I used as part of my project was a discourse analysis of women's scrapbooks. Discourse analysis offers insight into an aspect of the scrapbooking culture that cannot be understood through participant observation and interviews. As Rossman and Rollis (1998) stated, "Material culture can offer data that contradicts words and sights" (p. 146).

Feminist content analysis illuminates the discourse of women. Often this includes non-traditional forms of discourse which is appropriate for the examination of scrapbooks (Reinharz 1992). To enrich my content analysis and the information that I took from the interviews, I used a discourse analysis of women's scrapbooks. My plan was to examine women's scrapbooks for predominant themes. I then asked their permission to photograph pages that represented the typical themes. On occasion I came across a page that defied the stereotypical page, and when this occurred I also asked for permission to photograph the scrapbook page. I believe that this process allowed me to understand the discourse of the scrapbook through my own interpretation and through the interpretation of the participants.

The advantages to analyzing the discourse presented by cultural products are numerous. Reinharz (1992) addressed these issues, "Cultural artifacts have two distinctive properties. First, they possess a naturalistic, 'found' quality because they are not created for the purpose of study. Second, they are noninteractive, i.e., they do not require asking questions of respondents or observing people's behavior. Cultural artifacts are not affected by the process of studying them as people typically are. Instead, scholars can examine a written record or some other type of 'text' without interacting with the people who produced it" (p. 147). Ricoeur (1971) was one of the first social scientists who viewed text as a form of discourse. This methodology led to numerous studies of material culture and the value of documents as a window into a culture has been advanced by numerous scholars (Denzin 1989; Lincoln and Guba 1985; Miller 1997; Moore 1986; Tilley 1999).

There are multiple stages in the use of discourse analysis. As Hodder (2000) observed, "First, the interpreter has to identify the context within which things had similar meaning. The boundaries of the context are never 'given'; they have to be interpreted. Of course, physical

traces and separations might assist the definition of contextual boundaries.” (p. 711). I used all of the scrapbooks that women were willing to show me in my analysis. In order to differentiate between photographs and scrapbooks, I decided that photographs had to be crafted into a scrapbook page. This meant that the scrapbook page needed to contain more than just the photos, the page also had to contain some type of artistic and personal element that supported or contradicted the images portrayed within the photographs. Once they were crafted into a page, then the discourse of the photo combined with the discourse implied by the artistic setting, defined the page as a scrapbook for my research. There were also a few instances where I photographed and analyzed some of the scrapbook pages that were displayed on the walls of the scrapbook stores.



***An example of a set of scrapbook pages. The photographs are accented by the artistic elements of the page. Of particular significance is the journal section on the top-right of the page. The journal section is where the hobbyist records her thoughts and feelings on the event depicted in the pictures.***

The second stage that Hodder identifies in the process of conducting a discourse analysis is the start of the actual analysis. He writes, “Second, in conjunction with and inseparable from the identification of context is the recognition of similarities and differences” (p. 711). I grouped the photographs that I took of the scrapbook pages into general themes: vacations, weddings, family time and children’s activities, and everyday life. I also recognized scrapbooks that did not fit into these categories including scrapbooks that acted as diaries, a scrapbook of constructing a house, scrapbooks of pets and hunting scrapbooks. After I divided them into these general themes, I split them into ideological groupings based on the messages contained within the page.

The final stage of the process of discourse analysis involves linking the findings from your analysis to a larger theoretical context. Hodder explains that “The third evaluation that has to be made by the interpreter is of the relevance of general or specific historical theories to the data at hand” (p. 711). As I collected data, I recalled several feminist theories that applied to the phenomenon that I was studying including family discourse, kinwork, and doing gender.

### *Conclusion*

The methods I used during my analysis of the scrapbooking community allowed me to interpret and experience the phenomenon from multiple perspectives. My participant observation provided me with invaluable membership in the community, an understanding of the power of consumption in the hobby, insight into the transformative power of the hobby, and relationships with other hobbyists. Interviews provided me with the chance to hear the voice of the women that I observed. I met many women who accepted my study and wanted to illustrate how the hobby operated in their lives. Finally the discourse analysis of the scrapbooks provided insight into how women’s lives, their creativity and the commercial atmosphere of the hobby intersected.

Years after my experience with the scrapbook group in the small community center, I walk into my local scrapbook store a changed person. I know the owner of the store and we have had countless conversations about business, scrapbooking, employees, students and life. As I enter the workshop area, I recognize several familiar faces. There is Lisa, whose daughter had a prom dress “emergency” the night before the dance and I helped her find a last-minute seamstress so that her daughter could go. Sitting next to her is Jaime who immigrated to the United States from Brazil as a small child. She makes a living as a hospice worker and has been working on scrapbooks for her family members that showcase her family’s unique history and immigration. At the table next to them are Deanna and Jenna, a mother and daughter who scrapbook together every week. Deanna has a house full of animals, including three cats and a rabbit, which she memorialized in a scrapbook that was six inches thick. She has an affinity for the late NASCAR driver Dale Earnhardt and I remember the night when we discussed where we were when we heard of his death. Her daughter, Jenna, is a teacher who belly dances during her free time. She is a grade school teacher who sometimes refers to her students as “my kids”. When I reflect on these women, I realize that I know them as more than just interview participants, but as individuals with lived experiences and as overall good people. I mention this experience because it is impossible not to be changed by the people that you study, not to acknowledge that your lives have been intertwined, if even for a brief period of time. For me the process of collecting data was not just technical. It was also a process of gaining knowledge, learning about a culture and growing as a person.



### CHAPTER 3:

**“I do have to show you how to uninvite someone from your pictures”:**

#### **Family Discourse and Scrapbooking**



**The hobbyist has covered an “unaesthetic” element in this scrapbook page.**

It is Labor Day weekend and I have spent the afternoon interviewing Brenda, a friendly forty-one year old hairstylist, in her modest basement workspace. She is an avid scrapbooker and has converted the basement laundry area into an organized and functional craft space where she gathers with her female family members to scrapbook. We are surrounded by bookshelves full of her craft supplies: boxes full of stickers, folders full of patterned paper and several specialized scrapbook tools. The center shelves are reserved for her pride and joy: the scrapbooks that she crafted from her family photographs. Brenda completed several albums and she enthusiastically shows me scrapbook pages of her daughter's dance recitals, her parents' wedding, and her honeymoon trip to Florida. I am just getting ready to leave when she turns to me and says, "I do have to show you how to uninvite someone from your pictures. Have you ever done that?" I ask her what she means by this and she begins to turn pages in her scrapbook wedding album. "Let me see if I can find a picture where my brother-in-law...I figured that since he was out of the picture by the time we did...there he is." The picture reveals a nicely dressed woman with three small children; a little boy in a tuxedo and two identically dressed little girls in lacy blue dresses. Next to her is a huge flowered sticker over where Brenda's brother-in-law used to stand. We laugh about how Brenda creatively camouflaged her ex-brother-in-law. She then divulges that she never really liked him and when she decided to make a scrapbook of her wedding she had few reservations about editing him out of the pictures. Despite these strong feelings she also adds that it was for the aesthetic purpose of the scrapbook page, "but you know, I thought, he's really kinda hard to see. Anyways, you know, so he's gone!" Brenda and I laugh as we look through the rest of her wedding scrapbook. When I depart we exchange pleasantries and I leave with a grateful feeling that she has allowed me to look into her life for a few hours.

During my field work in the scrapbooking community, I witnessed many variations on Brenda's creative editorial style. Women have the central role in crafting family history in their scrapbooks. With the well-preserved memories of the archival-quality scrapbooks women could potentially have the last say in a family history that could last for hundreds of years. The hobbyists that I observed and interviewed used the editorial nature of the hobby in different ways. This was often an attempt on the part of hobbyists to craft their pictures into portraits that were more aesthetically appealing. Cropping, also known as cutting out the unnecessary portion of the picture (i.e. white space on the side of pictures, "ugly" features in the background), allowed crafters to create a more focused scrapbook page that centered on aspects of their pictures that they wanted to highlight. However this construction also served another function: there were several instances in which cropping allowed women to control and edit what portion of family life was displayed for the viewers of the scrapbook. If a hobbyist did not like the way she looked in a picture, then she would cut herself out of it, or, if she was like Brenda and did not like another person in a picture, she had no problem with cutting him or her out as well. All of these instances served the greater purpose of creating a family history and discourse that displayed idealized depictions of family life.

After my interaction with Brenda and other scrapbookers like her, I realized that scrapbooks contain a discourse on the family that is crafted and controlled by female family members. This chapter will define Bourdieu's concept of family discourse, its implications for family research, how family discourse is applied to domestic objects and how it is applied in the study of family photographs. I will then analyze how women's scrapbooks define family life through this concept and how women actively edit their photographs so that they fit these idealized concepts. I conclude by discussing the few examples of women who made scrapbooks

that rejected these idealized depictions of family in order to provide what they saw as a more accurate reflection of their family life.

### *Family Discourse Theory*

When flipping through the pages of a scrapbook, specific messages about family and family life are communicated. Recurrent themes of family life are present in modern scrapbooks: rosy cheeked children open presents under a Christmas tree; blissful Newlyweds cut a massive layered wedding cake; and families vacation on white sandy beaches. Even daily events are portrayed nostalgically in scrapbooks, with photos of children playing in the yard or families enjoying dinner together. On every page, every family member is happy. Family problems are not evident in the scrapbook's pages, and any physical and emotional pain are absent. Clearly hobbyists have views on family life, and their impressions are recorded in their scrapbooks. Demystifying these messages about family can be achieved through the use of family discourse.

Family discourse is a framework for examining the family as a unit defined by its members. This framework assumes that the family is not a fixed entity, but one built by specific individuals who create ideas about which individuals and what actions constitute family and family life. Bourdieu (1996) defines family discourse as:

the language that the family uses about the family, the domestic unit is conceived as an active agent, endowed with a will, capable of thought, feeling and action, and founded on a set of cognitive presuppositions and normative prescriptions about the proper way to conduct domestic relationships. (p. 20)

For Bourdieu and other family discourse theorists, if we analyze the language that the family uses in reference to itself, then scholars can have a better understanding of how the family conceives of itself in a social context.

While Bourdieu defines the assumptions behind family discourse, Gubrium and Holstein (1993) discuss the implications of family discourse analysis for family studies.

Conversation, description, and accounts – discourse of all forms, are not simply words spoken or written about an aspect of reality; they are simultaneously constitutive of reality. Family, therefore, may be construed as both a production and by-product of family discourse. The implication for family studies is to view the familial as an interactional accomplishment. (p. 661)

Gubrium and Holstein point out that understanding family discourse allows scholars to understand multiple dimensions of what it means to be a family.

Not only is it important to understand how family members speak about one another and the language that they use to describe family but this form of analysis can also be used to interpret familial objects. Scholars apply family discourse to the study of domestic objects. Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton (1981) described the meanings of domestic objects and how they express the discourse of the family. They explained how common household objects communicated messages about the family:

In many families a common set of concerns was expressed in the meanings attributed to the ecology of signs in the household – the objects, events, and admired persons shared by family members. When these meanings are directed toward related goals, it is possible to see them as “signs of family life,” or vital webs of relationships that give each family a unique identity. (p. 197)

When a scrapbook is examined as one of the objects that Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton describe then it is possible to understand family relationships and the broader social context. Scrapbooks allow scholars a window into how the family views itself or how the family wants

others to view it. They are not the first scholars to realize the importance of the scrapbook as a domestic object.

Although research on the area of family discourse and scrapbooks is rare, there is a body of analysis on family photographs and the discourse they present on the family. Lesy (1980) asked middle aged couples to show and explain the significance of the photographs taken over the course of their marriage. Through extensive interviews with four couples Lesy concluded that the photographs demonstrated larger societal conventions on marriage and parenthood. Sontag (1977) wrote about the use of photography in constructing a specific discourse of the family that illustrates family relationships with one another. She wrote “Through photographs, each family constructs a portrait-chronicle of itself - a portrait kit of images that bears witness to its connectedness” (p. 8). Sontag and many other scholars question whether or not the photograph of the family and the reality of family life are the same or whether photographs display idealized versions of the family. Building on previous understandings of the messages that family photographs communicate, Hirsch (1981) described the intersection of several ideologies in family photographs.

Family photography is an aesthetic, social, and moral product of which the family is at once seller and consumer. It survives and even grows in importance because it suggests age-old patterns both of life and aspiration. We all follow these whenever we choose which of our family photographs to keep, and which to discard, decisions we make not in the name of “historical accuracy” but for the sake of a standard of meaning that the images either uphold or betray. (p. 12)

Through the use of photography Hirsch illustrates that the meanings behind these photographs can drive how people choose to present the history of their family. Photographs and family photo

albums contain family histories that provide a distinct idea of how family is constructed. Gardner (1991) also explains how the editorial process behind the creation of an album communicates a message about family:

The selective process evident in picture-taking extends to the construction of the family album itself. By selecting certain photographs to be included in the album and rejecting others, the family visually constructs a particular view of family life and reality. (p. 243)

These studies of the process behind the selection of photographs indicate that individuals choose family photographs that communicate a specific message about the family.

Other scholars believe that family photographs contain a clear understanding of the “ideal” family and not an interpretation of the family as it actually exists. According to Boerdam and Oosterbaan Martinus (1980):

For family photography this means that a family presents an ideal version of itself by means of photographs. This ‘ideal’ family is made up of photographic images which make visible the abstract norms, values and feelings that surround family life like: a congenial atmosphere, loyalty, attention, homeliness, happiness, gaiety and solidarity. (p. 110)

This same idea about idealistic sentiments of the family is shared by Gillis (1996), who studied Victorian family albums. He explained that “[f]amily photos were then, as now, less a statement of what the family actually was than what it imagined itself to be. They assured the Victorians, as they continue to assure us, of family solidarity and endurance” (p. 78). Both of these scholars agree that family photographs are not an accurate representation of the family but a

representation of how individuals want their family remembered because they play a role in cementing the family as an institution.

The only scholarship performed on modern scrapbooking discussed the scrapbooks of young women. Katriel and Farrell (1991) examined the scrapbooks of college-aged women for the predominant discourses that described the life experience of the scrapbooker. They explain the significance of a scrapbook as a device for constructing a sense of self.

As autobiographical texts, scrapbooks articulate a sense of coherence and significance. The particular images of order and value presented by scrapbooks, as well as the occasions provided for contemplating these qualities, can offer important clues to the cultural construction of a sense of self in the American context. (p. 2)

Katriel and Farrell's article demonstrates the symbolic nature of the scrapbook and illustrates that the scrapbook provides a medium through which the scrapbooker can communicate ideologies that underlie her life. Katriel and Farrell viewed the scrapbook as an expression of college-aged women who were in a transition-stage of life. Extending research to other groups of women who scrapbook and the families that are represented in the scrapbooks expands on our understanding of how people utilize family discourse.

Family discourse suggests that scrapbooks should provide an excellent window into the meaning of family for the hobbyists. Family discourse scholars view family as an interactional accomplishment. In this way the women who create the scrapbooks create messages about their family life through the intersection of two important institutions: their family and societal conventions of family. Within the pages of the scrapbook many ideologies about American culture and the family emerge, including expectations that we have for family members and



family life. Understanding the themes about family that women create within scrapbooks also allows us to better understand the role of female family members, thus shedding light on our understanding of gender roles. Scrapbooks, like family photographs, present a discourse on the family. My research demonstrates the editorial process involved in putting together a family scrapbook and how women manipulate photographs so that the photographs fit how these hobbyists conceptualize family life. It also provides insight into the role that consumption and material products play in hobbyists' participation. Scrapbooking is unique from the discourse presented by family photographs because it involves the creative process of photography, page layout, and journaling. This additional material reinforces or contradicts the ideologies that are represented in the photographs. Research into scrapbooks examines whether or not individuals *ideally*, represent their family or *accurately*, represent their family and the role that community members and consumption plays in this construction. My discourse analysis of scrapbooks provides a better understanding of ideologies that define the family in this era. These include family as a heterosexual institution, as a happy institution, and family as a child-centered.

### *Methods*

I used three primary methods to analyze how women constructed ideas of family life in scrapbooks. Through my participant observation I was able to understand how the community of scrapbookers shaped how women viewed their personal messages of family. I also used the participant observation to experience how the culture of scrapbooking encouraged hobbyists to craft ideas of family. The second method that I used was interviews. I interviewed business owners and hobbyists about how the scrapbooking culture and the experience of crafting the scrapbook influenced their scrapbooks about family life. Finally the primary method that I used in this chapter was discourse analysis. I analyzed over one hundred scrapbooks that the women

who I interviewed provided. The interviewees allowed me to photograph pages from their scrapbook and I used these pages within my analysis. These three methods allowed me to understand and interpret the role that consumption plays in how women interpret family.

### *Family as a heterosexual institution*

A fascinating aspect of the discourse of scrapbooks is how they define normative<sup>11</sup> heterosexual relationships. In their examination of the marriage industry Otnes and Pleck (2003) demonstrate how the capitalist industry benefits from idealistic notions of heterosexual marriages. In line with this belief, research into the scrapbooking industry demonstrates how capitalist industry profits from the ideologies surrounding heterosexual relationships. During my participant observation, I realized that there was no diversity with respect to sexual orientation of images or products in the scrapbooking industry. Wedding stickers, papers and embellishments all relate to heterosexual themes and ideas about heterosexual love. In the trade magazines, pictures of example scrapbook pages only show heterosexual relationships and in the over one hundred scrapbooks that I analyzed as part of my research, there was no indication of gay or lesbian family members or partnerships<sup>12</sup>. Oswald (2000) discusses how heterosexual marriage ceremonies do not account for gay or lesbian family members. The same is true of gay or lesbian family members in scrapbooks, in essence there is not a physical “space” in scrapbooks for family members who are not heterosexual.

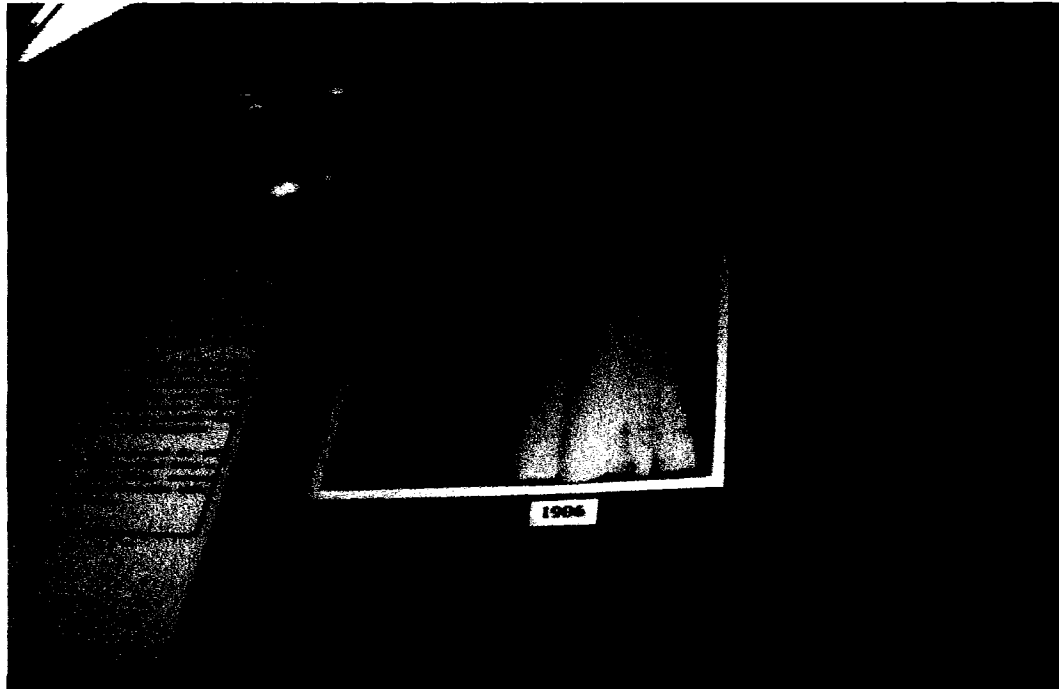
Scrapbooks construct heterosexuality as a long term commitment. Wedding scrapbooks contain messages of the length of a couple’s marriage as a demonstration of their love for one another. Stella used a scrapbook page to illustrate her great-grandparents forty-eight year

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<sup>11</sup> I use the term normative in the sense of what society perceives as normative.

<sup>12</sup> I realize that identifying gay or lesbian family members simply by looking through a scrapbook is nearly impossible; however, none of the scrapbooks contained pictures of same sex couples and none of the women that I spoke with about specific family members, mentioned a gay or lesbian family member.

marriage. She titled it, “Love at the General Store” and the side caption provided a short history of her great-grandparent’s marriage. She equated the longevity of their marriage with their love for one another, instead of basing the length of their marriage on societal conventions of the time.



*Love in a heritage album*

When I was working on the wedding scrapbook I was consumed with the idea of romantic love and in demonstrating it in every detail of the scrapbook. There are products to match every moment of the wedding. For one of my informants, this meant integrating part of her wedding dress into her scrapbook, and for another one of my informants, it meant recreating her wedding cake in paper format. In a wedding scrapbook, the wedding day is always portrayed as flawless; the foibles and stresses that are often the hallmark of weddings are erased from their photographic record. The journal sections of wedding scrapbooks refer to the day in glowing terms and the pictures are always flattering. The events that led up to the wedding day and the events of the ceremony and reception (e.g. cutting the cake or the first dance) dictate the wedding

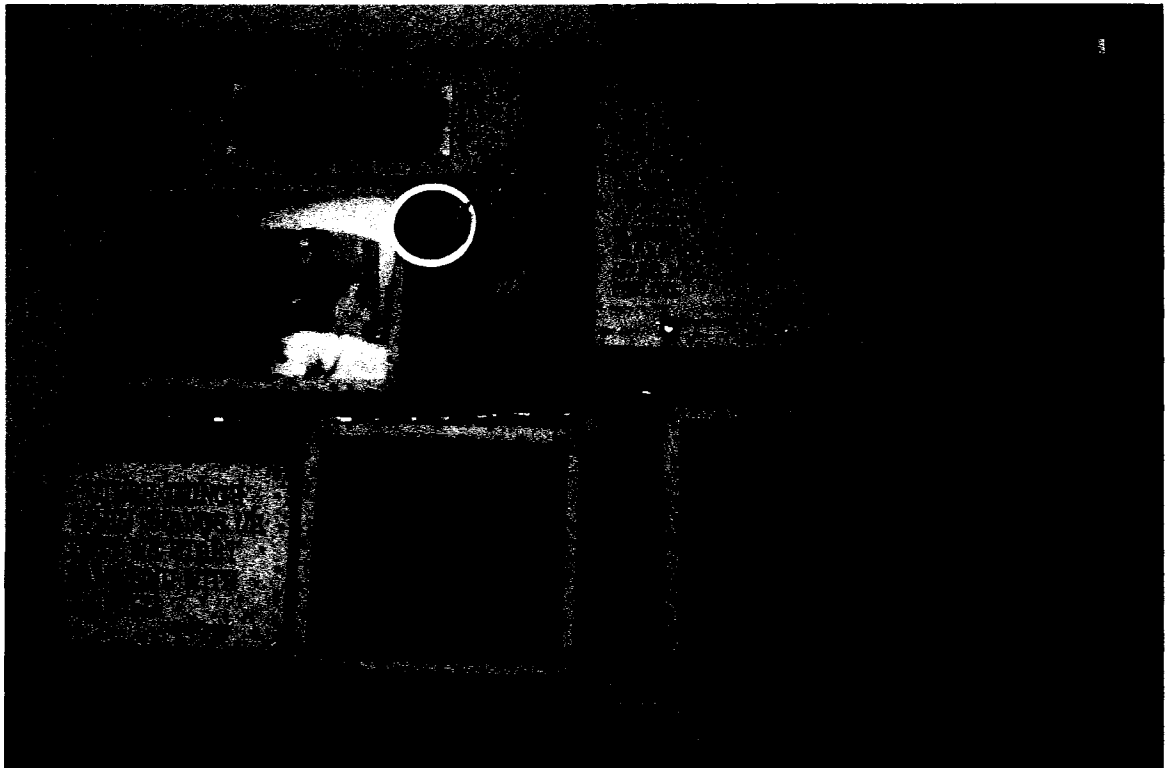
scrapbook. My informants spent a lot of time completing their albums with one of my informants completing her wedding scrapbook after her second wedding anniversary. For each of my informants, elaborately recording every detail of the ceremony and reception that they deemed acceptable was important. I even completed a scrapbook of my best friend's wedding during my time in the scrapbooking community, in part because I wanted to use the wide array of products that are sold for scrapbook pages of weddings. I discovered that I recorded every minute detail of her wedding day and my role as maid-of-honor, even completing a scrapbook page on the outhouse on the ceremony's location. As an example of the wide array of products that are available to hobbyists, there was even a die cut paper outhouse that I purchased to fit on this page.

#### *Family life as a happy institution*

The most predominant theme that I discovered when I looked through women's scrapbooks was a discourse of family happiness. Through my interviews, I discovered that this message was intentionally crafted by the hobbyists. When I asked women what a stranger might say if he or she looked through their scrapbooks, most of them provided a response similar to Alice's, "That we (the family) have a lot of fun" or Sandra's, "I want my book to show how we love each other". These responses indicated that women wanted the scrapbook depictions of their families to provide a specific impression of a happy and satisfying family life to the viewer.

For some women crafting the message of family happiness meant omitting significant events. Leah had an example of a family page that she had crafted of the pictures from her family's visit to her new home. The page displayed bright colors and pictures of each of the family members smiling into the camera. She ended her journal section with "Having family at my new place was a great feeling". Leah immediately equates the family institution with positive

feelings in these pages. However, when I interviewed Leah about these pages, she recounted that her toilet broke during her family's visit and she experienced a lot of stress because of this malfunction. While the toilet breaking was a significant event during her family's visit, she chose not to include it in her record, in part because this accident did not reflect the larger discourse of what she believed constituted a memorable and pleasant family visit.



#### *A Family Scrapbook Page*

There is a cultural norm of happiness in the scrapbooking culture and in scrapbooking products that influences how women present information about their families. The stress of family holidays is never present in scrapbook pages: turkeys magically cook themselves, children innocently play with each other, husbands and wives are pictured in a loving manner. I noticed that there was a tendency for hobbyists to include the line “We all had fun” or “We all had a good time” at the end of journaling sections of scrapbook pages. It was a common way for members of the scrapbooking culture to conclude the journal portions of their pages. I often

caught myself ending these sections with one of these phrases and I would question why I needed to state this when it was obvious in the pages. I was also concerned with how generic the statements were and how readily they were used, without question, by other scrapbookers. After reflecting on these questions, I found that many of the products that were sold in scrapbook stores equated family with happiness. Many hobbyists used scrapbook quote books to inspire their pages and these books only presented quotes about family members that were positive and inspirational. For example, I bought a sheet of stickers for a scrapbook page that I made for my family. The light green stickers had several quotes about family life that reflected ideas about legacy, “We begin and end with family” and happiness, “A mother’s love”. The end result is that the hobbyist often consciously or unconsciously conforms to these norms and scrapbooks reflect the industries’ ideologies of family life.

#### *Family as a child centered institution*

Women also communicated messages about children and childhood through their scrapbooks. Most of them framed childhood as an idyllic period of time during which milestones are marked by happy photographs accented by printed paper and special stickers. The problems associated with childhood (e.g. stress at school, sibling rivalry) are never addressed in modern scrapbooks. All children are immortalized in a Stepford-esque manner where the children are above average. Many hobbyists felt compelled to record every detail of their child’s life. I met several women who completed a single scrapbook for each year of their child’s life. I also heard of several women who completed a scrapbook page for each day of her child’s first year of life. The end result is that hobbyists create a record that positions the lives of their children as the center of family life.

Women who make scrapbooks of their children's lives frame their pregnancy as the start of childhood. This often means that women include their sonograms within their baby scrapbooks. An example of a woman who documented this was Francis, who crafted a scrapbook page about her early relationship with her unborn child. In one corner of the scrapbook page, she placed a photo of herself in early pregnancy with her husband standing next to her. In the other corner she placed the sonogram of her daughter. She filled the center of the page with a letter to her daughter: "You began as a tiny seed of our imagination. We pictured your wiggly little fingers and toes. We felt you turn, kick and even hiccup! You grew and grew for nine long months until at last you were ready to see the rest of the world. What a beautiful baby you are!!" Francis' page was typical of hobbyists who only crafted the high points or joys of their pregnancy. It reflected her belief in the centrality of the child to the family and documented how she viewed her child's entry into the family.



*Unborn Scrapbook Page*

I witnessed how influential the scrapbooking community could be in directing hobbyists on how to construct their memories so that they reflected happy themes. One of my informants experienced the dilemma of whether or not to record a stressful event in the scrapbook pages she made out of her sonogram photos. We spent a Friday night scrapbooking together a month after her daughter was born. My informant had experienced a complication of placenta previa during her early pregnancy that was discovered during her first set of sonograms. Her early pregnancy was a stressful time for her and it colored the rest of her pregnancy, leading her to worry about the health of her baby on a regular basis, however, when it came time to document her sonogram she debated on whether or not to include the complication in her scrapbook. The other women in the scrapbook group had mixed responses: some believed that documenting the complication could be useful for her daughter, possibly serving as an informal medical history or demonstrating how concerned her mother was for her baby's health; other women believed that she should omit the complication in order to frame the instance in a positive light. In the end my informant decided that she was uncomfortable discussing her complication in her scrapbook. The complications of her pregnancy did not fit the scrapbooking culture's ideas about what constitutes a good scrapbook page.

While the end result of the scrapbook often displays an idealized childhood, the process of crafting the scrapbook of childhood is not always easy for some women. Maria was a woman whom I interviewed one evening as she was putting the finishing touches on a scrapbook for her daughter. The scrapbook was both aesthetically beautiful and unconventional at the same time because she was fond of ignoring the artistic trends within the scrapbooking industry in favor of developing her own scrapbooking style. While unconventional in style, the themes often reflected mainstream attitudes towards children and childhood. There were pictures of her



daughter smiling as she wore her Easter dress or photos of her reflection in the window as she looked out over a snow covered field. She even created a poetic scrapbook page out of pictures of her newborn daughter. She made her poem and an angelic picture of her daughter the central focus of the page. The poem stated, “You flamed into the world out of my never and into forever... You came dancing through an eternity of impossibilities, You came from ice, from fire... And for the first time I knew the universe could smile”.



*Baby Scrapbook Page*

While the poem demonstrates some reluctance at being a mother through the line “out of my never”, the end of the poem depicts motherhood and her child as an optimistic gift from the universe. When I asked Maria to describe what the process of making the scrapbook was like for her she paused and looked down at her hands for awhile. Then she looked into my eyes and replied:

MARIA: Umm. Some of it's been painful because her childhood was not a happy time for me. But, mostly it's just been really interesting to look back and just, you know, there's so much you forget after awhile. It's been an interesting process, there's some nights I can't work on it, other nights that I can.

HEATHER: So what would you want, then, her to take away from this scrapbook?

MARIA: Just how special she is, because she really is a very unique person.

Creating a discourse that reflected good memories from childhood took concerted effort on Maria's part. She continued to explain that she wanted this to provide her daughter with a testament to her love for her and to demonstrate her daughter's individuality. For Maria the scrapbook served as a form of compensation for her daughter's tumultuous childhood. Although her daughter's childhood was a painful period for Maria, there is no evidence of this pain in her scrapbook, and she opted to focus on the events that her daughter would cherish.

The storefronts and hobbyists also influenced how women recorded memories of their children. Hobbyists are encouraged to portray their children in an idealistic manner by the scrapbooking industry. Karen, a thirty-eight year old mother of a six year old girl described how she was encouraged to scrapbook her daughter's life:

I know you don't put bad moments in your photo album, not many people do. I mean, I guess that she has a happy life, ya know, that it's, ya know, just like one of the comments you said was, "oh, she looks like a good baby" and she was, so you hope that some of those things come out in what you put on the page. So, it's like one of the instructors at the Scrap Shack says that she writes down something on her calendar every day about something the kids did or something they said

and she said it's so easy to go back and do those pages and she said even if it's something silly ... and she said it may not be hardly anything but ... had a good day at school, but even then she knows, ya know, she can go back and, and see and I think ya know, sometimes I need to do that too.

Karen acknowledges the pressure to record the happy moments of her daughter's life and she provides insight into how the industry, through the instructor at the scrapbook store The Scrap Shack, encourages this practice. Through the practices of individual hobbyists, the encouragement of other scrapbookers and the products and ideals of the scrapbooking industry, women overwhelmingly recorded the lives of their children as happy and idyllic.

#### *Editorial power and gender roles*

Scrapbooking provided women with an activity in which they could exercise a form of social power allotted to their gender. The hobbyists that I interviewed recognized that they crafted a message about family life. They also recognized their role as central in this process, as Katherine, a stay-at-home mother of two school-aged boys stated:

One thing that has really hit me, a year ago a friend of ours' died in a motorcycle accident and he was younger than I was...and I thought no one is going to do this when I'm dead...no one is going to put together my son's baby book, and if they were to do it, they aren't going to do it the way *I* would do it.

Katherine realized the power of crafting her son's book in a way that she wanted in order to communicate her personal message of her son's childhood. She also recognized her role as the historian of the family who was responsible for documenting her son's early years. Both of these roles allowed her to have control over how her son's early life is depicted.

This role of family historian often influenced women to view their scrapbooks as contributing to a family legacy. Emma, a married mother of three teenage girls described how important it was for her to develop a family history through her scrapbooks. She admitted that other hobbies would not provide her with the outlet to communicate messages about her family but scrapbooking allowed her to provide a history that reflected the personality of the family members:

I guess it is about passing on a legacy to your kids, to those who come after you.

I guess you do hope it tells something about the kind of person you were. You could make a quilt or something else, that's nice but you really can't tell the personality or anything about that person.

Emma understood that her scrapbook could communicate a message about family members, even if they were no longer present. In this way, the scrapbook takes on a life of its own and becomes a family member who provides a family history when the creator of the scrapbook is not present. This is very ironic, because the women's use of commercial products and adoption of the happy family norms erases evidence of family individuality and personality while it preserves it.

Katherine and Emma believed a family legacy was created through documenting major family events including holidays and major landmarks. For other hobbyists, the idea of a family legacy is documented in recording the daily events of family life. Michelle, an avid scrapbooker, recognized the power of the medium to describe the daily history of her family. When I asked her what she hoped the scrapbook would say about her family, she replied:

I would like the scrapbook to say just stories of their lives. That's what I'm, that's what my hope and my goal is with these, is that it will be stories of the lives of the family.

For Michelle and other scrapbookers like her, the scrapbook is one of the few media that communicates and defines family life.

Scrapbooking also allowed women to fulfill their conception of gender roles. At times women used the scrapbook to provide evidence of being a good mother. When I was cropping one February evening with a group of women who had teen-aged children, it became clear how women edit their pages to match what they wished their children would be like and how they would like to be seen as a mother. One hobbyist was making a scrapbook page of her teenage daughter. She used a large beautiful picture of her daughter as the focal point of her page. She then surrounded the picture with positive adjectives for teenage women: fun-loving, sweet, kind. At one point during her page construction she had a creative writer's block and she asked one of her friends for help and they started to jokingly list negative adjectives of teenage female life: bossy, moody, lazy. They erupted into laughter and then returned to their pages. Later she showed her friend the completed page and the friend asked the mother why she did not include the negative adjectives on her page. The woman replied, "Because I don't want anyone to think that I don't like being a mother". Her concern with how others would view her role as a mother led her to edit her page so that her daughter is depicted as a teenage princess and her own role as a dedicated parent is immortalized through her action in creating the scrapbook page that depicts her daughter in this light.

Scrapbookers also believed that providing memories for their children through scrapbooks fulfilled their gender role as a good mother. Daphne described the purpose of her

scrapbooks as providing memories for her children. Her scrapbooks were full of her children taking part in every day activities including feeding the ducks by the lake, taking baths and reading books. The scrapbooks acted as a way for her to have a material demonstration of her love for her three children. When I asked her what she would like her family to take away from her scrapbooks she replied:

That we have tradition. And that I care about them. And the main thing is that I cared enough to stop and take the moment to record a piece of their life. You know, that's the main thing. I want them to be able to look back and say, "wow, she cared enough to write this stuff down." Because you do. I mean, especially when they get older and they have kids, and that's when you really start to reflect, "Oh, what was I doing at that age?", or "what happened to me at that age?" Well now they know, it's all right there. And they have it. They don't have to wonder if I'm not around to tell them the story anymore, if they forget the story, if it's not told the right way or if they forget a piece of it. You know, it's all right there for them. And that's the main thing, that I cared enough to take the time to record their little bitty moments in life.

For Daphne creating the scrapbook acted as a way to fulfill her gender role as a good mother and provided a family history for her children. The legacy of memories that she provided for her children will ultimately reflect her personal viewpoint on family life.

#### *"Defying" idealized notions of family*

While many women create scrapbooks that reinforce idealized notions about what constitutes family life, other hobbyists feel compelled to record aspects of family life that are not idealistic. The end result of these scrapbooks is that women frame difficult family events as

empowering or sanitized versions of family events. This became apparent to me one afternoon when I sat in the dining room of Danice, a stay-at-home mom with two small children. We had been looking through her heritage albums (the scrapbooks that are a cross between a genealogical family tree and a scrapbook) and she gave me the history of her grandfather, an Army soldier who worked at a hospital in Germany after the Second World War ended. She showed me his medals, the patches from his uniform and then she divulged a difficult family secret: her grandfather's first wife sent him a "dear john" letter because she had an affair with Danice's grandfather's brother. When I asked her what she had discovered about the process of uncovering this part of her family's history and framing it into her scrapbook she replied:

I don't know how we're going to approach that (her grandfather's divorce from his first wife), or even if we will. I guess we'll have to put something in there to show that there was a first wife. (she looks out the window for a second) What do you do with stuff like this?

Her observation is a common dilemma for scrapbookers: what do you do with the family events that are not ideal? Family life is replete with conflict, pain and loss, however, most scrapbooks do not reflect these elements of the family life cycle. Hobbyists often feel no immediate connection to these events, yet they also internally debate over whether or not they should record them.

The majority of the scrapbooks that I examined presented an idealized discourse on the family and childhood. However, there was a subset of women who decided that they also wanted to scrapbook some of the negative or difficult times of their lives. One afternoon, I was spending time in a scrapbook store, and I asked the owner if she ever had any strange scrapbooks. She recounted an incident of a woman who decided to scrapbook her experience with breast cancer.

The cancer patient chronicled the diagnosis, her treatments and her eventual prognosis. There was also an evening when I attended a crop and I overheard the strangest theme of a scrapbook. A middle aged woman was telling the owner of the store how she was working on a scrapbook of all of the funerals of her family members. As she went on to explain the concept behind the scrapbook it became clear that part of the scrapbook was meant to memorialize the person's life, with happy family pictures and tasteful obituaries. The other portion of the scrapbook was somewhat strange with pictures of the actual funeral, the cemetery, the flowers and the mourners<sup>13</sup>.

Scrapbooking death also put life into perspective for hobbyists and allowed them to have some control in an uncontrollable life situation. This experience was exemplified when I interviewed Sophia, a twenty-three year old graduate student in Human Resources who was engaged to David, a Marine who was stationed in Iraq at the time of our interview. Sophia made a scrapbook of David's career as a Marine, starting with boot camp and continuing through his time overseas. The majority of pages within the scrapbook were patriotic and action-oriented with photographs of his graduations or clippings of various articles about his unit. As I turned through her scrapbook I eventually came upon a page of the funeral of one of the Marines in David's unit who had been killed in action. Her fiancé served as a pallbearer and she had taken several photographs of him processing with the casket and standing at attention during the service. She had also attached a newspaper article about the fallen Marine. I asked Sophia to explain why she chose to include this in her scrapbook and she thought for a few moments then answered:

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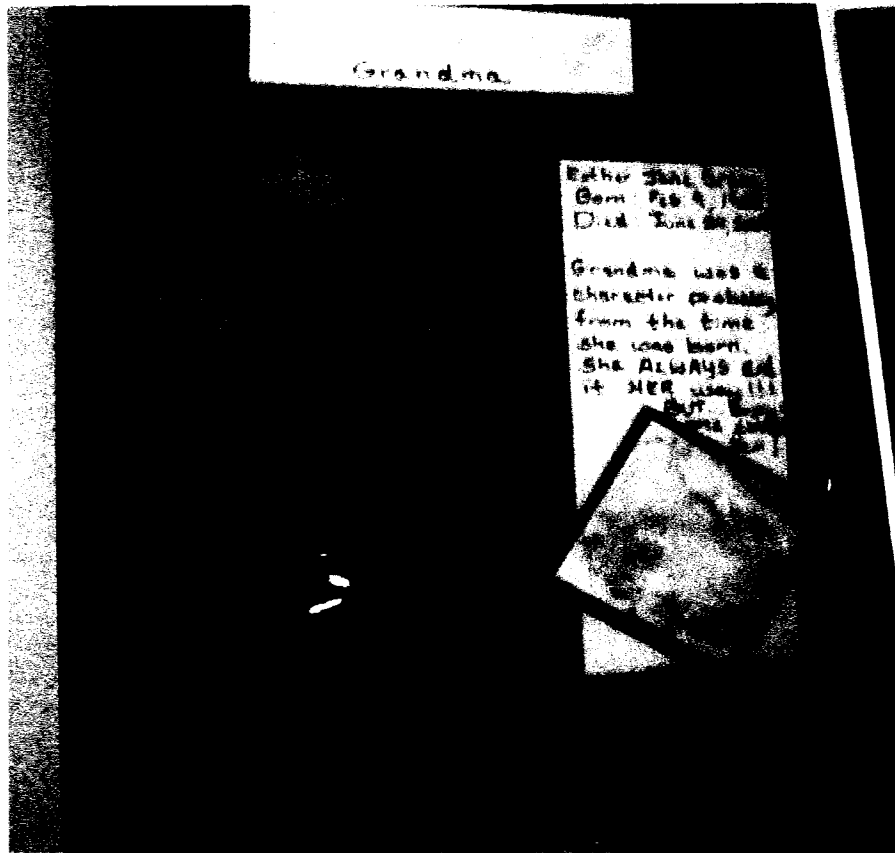
<sup>13</sup> While this may seem strange for contemporary scrapbookers, Victorians were often fond of taking pictures of the bodies of their deceased loved ones. This included propping them up in chairs or laying them peacefully in bed. The intent of the photo was to give the illusion that the deceased had passed into an eternal sleep. It was one of several ways that the Victorians maintained an emotional connection with their deceased. Aries, Philippe. 1985. *Images of Man and Death*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.



Well, when the war started everyone thinks like, “they’re gonna die” and the Marines are like “I’m invincible nothing will happen to me” and all of a sudden something happens and it just hit me really hard, he [her fiancé, David] was like “George is missing and he’s dead, I know it” and I’m like, “ok”. You know, like what do you say? ...I mean he said “this is the hardest thing I’ve had to do, I could run a marathon, I could climb up a wall, I could jump out of a plane, but I could not look into his mother’s eyes and say on behalf of the United States here is your son’s purple heart”. And he will never be the same for it, and he realizes that he’s much more vulnerable now and that he is mortal and they were great guys, I mean he loved them and looked up to them and he didn’t have a problem with it (referring to the scrapbook page of the funeral) so I think there should be a picture in there.

Sophia believed that including this photograph would help to memorialize the soldier who had died and provide a reminder of what she saw as the cost of freedom.

Scrapbooks that memorialize deceased loved ones usually focused on the positive traits of the family member. On the rare occasions when scrapbooks address a deceased family member there is little record of the painful emotional process of that death and the page includes no discussion of how the family member died or their funeral. When scrapbookers do acknowledge a death they usually do so with a memorial page in which a flattering photo of the loved one and a sentimental note about the person are included on the page.



#### *Memorial Scrapbook Page*

Sarah showed me a scrapbook page that she had made of her deceased grandmother. The photo that she used on the page was lighthearted: it pictured her grandmother in a colorful outfit wearing a floppy hat and sunglasses. She is seated in a patio chair with a wry smile on her face. The top of the page had a “Memories of Grandma” title and the side of the page listed her name, her dates and then the caption, “Grandma was a character, probably from the time she was born. She always did it her way”. When I saw this page I commented to Sarah on how much fun her grandmother must have been. With a serious look on her face she turned to me and dismissively said, “Well....She was an alcoholic.” She then continued to tell me about how mean her grandmother could be because of her alcoholism, but she decided not to include that in her memorial page. The memorial page needed to reflect a woman who was a loving and devoted family member because it helped the scrapbooker recall happy memories of her grandmother.

The action of making the scrapbook page also made the scrapbooker look like a devoted family member.

Some women felt that they needed to provide what they saw as an accurate depiction of their family life. These hobbyists viewed their scrapbooks as a family record that depicted all of the significant family events. The end result is that scrapbooks chronicle all family events as empowering. When I interviewed Megan, a mother of three girls, she described her scrapbook as a diary of her family. When I asked her to clarify how she did this, she went onto share the topics that her scrapbook addressed:

HEATHER: So a chronicle of your family life is basically what you would like this to be?

MEGAN: Yeah, you know, yeah. Special moments that we spent together, the times that we had, the shared, the happy, the sad, all of it. I'm not just going for the happy times only.

HEATHER: So what do you have in your scrapbooks that's not happy?

MEGAN: Well, we haven't really had a lot of sadness in the family.

HEATHER: That's good.

MEGAN: Right. Lately. Since I really started scrapbooking. But one thing, one time I was taking pictures of Nancy and she was in funky moods and I called it "many moods, same beautiful face" or something like that. Because in one she was just mean, you know, angry. And another one, and she had some Minnie Mouse ears on so I called it Minnie Moods, one beautiful face, or something like that. So, you know, it's not all that hahaha, you know, you show the side of the kids that, you know. And there's pictures of Carolyn there after she broke her

ankle, you know, they dropped her in cheerleading, so then you're telling the story of what happened there and the sadness that she had because she missed certain things, you know, her senior year. It's not always the fun stuff.

Her ability to chronicle the unhappy moods of her children and the hardship that her daughter faced after her cheerleading accident is a direct way that she rejects idealized depictions of family life in order to present what she considers to be an accurate family history. Documenting her daughters in this way also acts as the way that she controls how her daughters are portrayed.

Other mothers used the scrapbook as an empowering tool in recalling and reframing what were once uncertain family situations. This occurred when women scrapbooked children with serious health conditions. Erin described her non-traditional baby book about her son who was briefly hospitalized after his birth. I asked her about the pages where she chronicled these stressful events:

HEATHER: So I wanted to ask you about a page. So you went into the hospital, you even wrote in here, "It was a very scary time for us", whereas most people won't include this in their baby albums.

ERIN: I'm trying to be realistic. I don't know if you read in this, I hated it. (referring to a page where she discussed the discomfort of pregnancy) I didn't hate it, but my back ached, I was tired all the time, so I tried to be real with what I'm doing. I don't have my December pages here (referring to her other scrapbook), but inside it I put that my daughter screamed the whole time. Lately I've been thinking about scrapbooking – "God, why do I like it? I'd rather be here than home all day long right now." Maybe because I'm sugar-coating life, but I don't want to do that, so I try to be pretty realistic.

Her insistence on being realistic created a scrapbook that documented the highs and lows of her children's early lives. She also acknowledged how powerful and engaging the process of making the scrapbook could be, often leading her to escape into the hobby for several hours. Crafting the pages of her child's illness and brief hospital stay framed the uncertain situation in a controllable and sanitized manner. The pages of her son's hospital stay demonstrated messages of strength and endurance instead of hopelessness and despair.

Constructing scrapbook pages about difficult periods of their child's life was also empowering. Erin was not the only mother who sought to be realistic with her child's experience in the hospital. Eleanor was a mother of three small children. She had befriended me at a local power crop during which scrapbookers spend the morning together in one marathon session making a complete album. Over the course of the morning, we talked about our lives and she readily explained that her two boys both suffer from varying degrees of cerebral palsy. I asked if I could interview her and we set up a time to meet later that week. As I sat in her living room one morning looking through her scrapbooks I noticed that she had several pages that were dedicated to the variety of surgeries and physical therapies that her son's had experienced.



*Surgery Scrapbook Page*

The pages had pictures of her sons before and after their procedures. They also featured some of the hospital workers who cared for her sons. When I asked her about her choice of documenting these experiences in their lives, she adamantly explained her position.

HEATHER: So what made you decide to chronicle this? (referring to a set of scrapbook pages on her son's surgery)

ELEANOR: Because it's something that makes him, him. He has an implant other people don't. I'm working on Jim's surgery day, for his G2... Then there's, we actually wanted (flips through the scrapbook to some pages with professional photographs) we have them done (professional photographs) so that we can see. (She displays the professional photographs where her son is posed so that his ear implant is the focal point of the photograph) I guess most people hide injuries or differences, we're like, we don't do that. That makes them feel like (searches for words)

HEATHER: Feel bad or ashamed?

ELEANOR: Like it's wrong. This is him with his harness on (shows a picture of her son smiling while wearing his apparatus).

For Eleanor and her family, displaying the differences of her children made them more unique and made their differences empowering. She also understood that her scrapbook reflected her attitude towards her children and their abilities. In crafting the pages so that they positively highlighted her children's conditions, she was demonstrating her own love and acceptance of them. Her acceptance of reality contrasted with women who hid the embarrassing or shameful elements of family life. The contrast between these scrapbooks displays a tendency to memorialize family as an idealistic institution even when, in reality, it is not.

## *Conclusion*

This chapter explored the family scrapbooks of women in the scrapbooking hobby. It discussed family discourse, how it applies to the study of scrapbooks, how scrapbooks define family and family life: including viewing family life as a heterosexual institution, as a happy institution, and family as a child centered institution demonstrates women's editorial power. I also discussed instances where women chose to ignore the idealized notions of family for a history that they felt represented their family. Even when hobbyists are trying to be realistic or accurate they are still constructing ideas about family life.

The act of creating and looking through the scrapbook provides control for women in experiences that can provide them with feelings of powerlessness and helplessness. It also allows them to live up to a societal standard of what constitutes a "good mother" and fulfilled that expectation of the gender role. Finally, the scrapbook creates a space where family is sanitized, where the difficult or embarrassing moments or memories of family life are excised. I think back to the time that I spent with Brenda, who crudely camouflaged her ex-brother in law and I think about how easy it is to cover up, cut or reframe difficult periods of family life. The end result is that the consumption process allows family members to craft a family that they can live in while participating in a leisure activity that they enjoy.

## CHAPTER 4:

“You sit around and talk about life”:

The Role of Kin Work in Consumption



*A mother and daughter spend quality time scrapbooking together at a crop session.*



Theresa and Shirley would not miss a Friday night at their local scrapbook store. When I first met them at a crop for a grand re-opening of a scrapbook store, it was abundantly clear that they had a special mother-daughter bond that could be depicted in a television melodrama. When you watch them together, you notice that they have the same smile and they carry themselves in the same manner. After we spent the evening crafting together, they agreed to participate in an interview. A few weeks later, I met Theresa in a local coffee shop one afternoon. For the first few minutes of the interview, we talked about how she started scrapbooking and her interest in the hobby. Midway through the interview I asked her about her relationship with her daughter, and she responded by holding out her wrist. "You see these" she said as she pointed to the three thin gold bracelets on her wrist, "they are eternity bracelets. I had some of the heirloom jewelry melted and made into these. They don't have a clasp so they are here forever. My daughter and I got them together". I was moved by the symbol of their bond and I commented on the beauty and simplicity of the bracelets. Theresa then shows me her scrapbook. The pages are full of tributes to family celebrations and vacations. Towards the center of the book there is a page devoted to the activity of scrapbooking. The photos display Theresa's close friends and family members sitting around tables and working on their scrapbooks. Of special significance to Theresa, is a picture of Theresa and her daughter sitting next to each other at a table, happily working on their scrapbooks. She recounts to me how special their time together is and how often they enjoy scrapbooking.

I met Shirley later that day in a fast food restaurant not far from where she worked. When I walked up to meet her inside the restaurant the first part of her outfit that I noticed was her eternity bracelets. The bracelets supported my belief that Theresa and Shirley have the type of mother-daughter relationship that encourages spending quality time together. I realized that

Theresa and Shirley are typical of many of the women who use scrapbooking as the time that they have to spend with their female friends and relatives. Although the impact of the hobby on the bonds between women varies, the hobby industry creates a space where women can participate in the work of exercising their relationships. The idea of maintaining kinship ties through conscious effort is not new to scholarship, but the use of hobbies in this effort is unexamined.

During my time in the scrapbooking community as a participant observer, through discourse analysis and through interviews with hobbyists, I discovered that women would scrapbook with their female friends and family members. At times this was a spontaneous event - - women would phone one another and plan on a night of scrapbooking -- for other women this was a regularly scheduled event in their lives which occurred on a weekly or monthly basis. I also found that women would give scrapbooks as gifts as a way to promote or maintain family relationships. This led me to the conclusion that women's leisure and consumption patterns played an important role in building and maintaining relationships with friends and family members, hence the hobby industry facilitated the practice of kin work. Women participated in a form of kin work that established relationships while using the activity to reinforce their gender roles and to fulfill personal needs.

#### *Social networks and the gendered work of scrapbooking*

One of the important aspects of scrapbooking is that women will scrapbook together in groups. These crop sessions allow women to share in their scrapbooking tools and skills while they spend time together. My participant observation and interviews led me to the following observation: that scrapbooking acts as a form of gendered labor. During my time in the field, I met hundreds of scrapbooking enthusiasts, only two of those hobbyists were men. The men that I

observed did not scrapbook with other family members or friends, but instead would often spend the scrapbooking evening working on their projects alone. It was unclear from my observation, whether men self-segregated or were excluded by the female scrapbookers. The predominance of women in the hobby was the first indication that it is a gendered activity.

One of the ways that the activity of scrapbooking and the creation of scrapbooks can be interpreted is through DiLeonardo's (1987/1998) framework of kin work. This form of work illustrates some of the attitudes and trends behind domestic politics and interpersonal relationships. She discusses how the effort of maintaining family relationships was previously overlooked as a form of reproductive labor. DiLeonardo defined this form of work as:

By kin work I refer to the conception, maintenance, and ritual celebration of cross – household kin ties, including visits, letters, telephone calls, presents, and cards to kin; the organization of holiday gatherings; the creating and maintenance of quasi-kin relations; decisions to neglect or intensify particular ties; the mental work of reflection about these activities; and the creation and communication of altering images of the family and kin vis-à-vis the images of others, both folk and mass media. (p. 248)

DiLeonardo suggests that it is primarily female family members who perform kin work. She uses examples of families who lost important female members and explains how the remaining male members of the family did not fill the gender role of kin work. Ultimately for DiLeonardo, kin work is a gendered form of labor for female family members.

In order to understand the importance of kin work and its implications for family relationships in the lives of women, a brief understanding of the nature of women's family and friendship relationships is necessary. There is a plethora of research on women's family and

friendship relationships and the impact of these relationships on the lives of women (Rich 1980). One of the first studies of women, friendship and leisure pointed out that leisure was more important to women than men and that women prefer spending time with friends as a form of leisure (Cunningham and Johannis 1960). Boyle and McKay (1995) demonstrate how the unpaid work that women perform in a leisure activity supports a patriarchal system. Handler (1995) discovers that college sororities encourage sisterhood while supporting the prevailing patriarchal order through an emphasis on events that encourage heterosexual relationships. Finally two studies point to how structural resources impact women's friendships and family relationships. Waite and Harrison (1992) explain how specific structural factors including: the nature of women's relationships with one another, the household structure, distance, resources and predisposition to contact with family, affected women's relationships with kith and kin. Walker (1995) explains how economic class differences affect the manner of friendships between women where working class women reported more open conflict with each other over resources and middle-class women reported more difficulty in asking their friends for help.

This scholarship supports the belief that relationships are not spontaneous events but connections that require different types of conscious effort based on the part of the actor. Research into this phenomenon has resulted in the branch of scholarship that encompasses the study of kin work. Most scholars who study kin work often focus on how female family members look after and care for elderly family members (Abel 1991; Aronson 1992; Brody 1990; Burton, Dilworth-Anderson, and Bengtson 1991; Gerstel and Gallagher 2001; Globerman 1996; Horowitz 1985; Nelson and Abel 1990; Rosenthal 1985). This research is significant for several reasons including its demonstration of the demanding physical and emotional nature of this type of labor (Brody 1985; Gerstel and Gallagher 1993; Gerstel and Gallagher 1994), and it

also demonstrates that kin work is necessary in order to preserve the modern family unit where several generations are living in separate residences.

There is also a branch of research that examines families of color and how they utilize kin work as a strategy for familial maintenance. Espiritu (2001) writes about the gendered responsibilities of the “ethnic” socialization of women in a Filipino community in San Diego, California. Alicea (1997) describe the emotional and physical costs that Puerto Rican women suffer through the burden of kin work that they perform as members of an immigrant transnational community. However, she also points out that this allows women an area where they receive respect and recognition that would otherwise be denied to them. Stack and Burton (1993) describe how kin work functions to fulfill the emotional and physical needs of the rural black families that they studied. Stack and Burton saw kin work as a product of social conditions where, “Kin work is the consequence of culturally constructed family obligations defined by economic, social, physical, and psychological family needs” (p. 161). For scholars who study ethnic families and kin work, then, structural oppression both enhances the importance of kin work and creates a further gender dichotomy.

Kin work has also been examined in a transnational context. Bolak (1997) discusses how gender, culture and the role of women as primary wage earners informs the gendered labor of couples living in Turkey. Kim (1996) explains how daughters-in-law in South Korean families negotiate new strategies for performing kin work in a rapidly industrializing society that clings to traditional gender roles. Zontini (2004) describes the variety of ways that Filipino and Moroccan women who are residing in Barcelona as immigrant workers practice kin work with family members who are living in other countries. Chee (2005) found an interesting class difference in Taiwanese women who were raising families in the United States. She wrote, “While

underprivileged women participate in kin work for mutual emotional and material support, women in my sample performed kin work to maintain and enhance their social capital instead, a class based purpose” (237). For transnational families, kin work becomes a survival mechanism for families who must reconfigure relationships because they are physically separated from their home country and/or family of origin.

The gendered work of kin work that has been studied in heterosexual families is also found in lesbian families. Carrington (1999) discovered that networks of intimate friends act as family units for gay men and lesbian women. These friendship networks form what Stacey (1990) terms the postmodern family. Carrington’s research discovered the presence of kin work in lesbian families as well. One of the main questions he asks is, who performs kin work in families with same sex partners? Carrington illuminated several important aspects of kin work in lesbian families: that the amount of kin work that is performed is dependent on economic class status (families that earn more money have more time and resources to participate in kin work); that the kind of community that one lives in affects his or her performance of kin work; that the presence of children has a negative impact on the amount of kin work that he or she performs; that the occupational identities impacted the amount of kin work that family members can participate in (individuals with flexible work schedules or environments participate in greater amounts of kin work); that the length of the relationship increases the amount of kin work that individuals participate in; and that ethnic and racial identities influence the amount of kin work (Latino/Asian/African-identified lesbian couples participate in more kin work than their white counterparts).

There is also a relationship between kin work and labor market activities. Labor market activities are improved and enhanced through the use of kin work. One of my later chapters

discusses how female business entrepreneurs' relationships with their clients are integral in the consumption habits of hobbyists. It also demonstrates how beneficial traditionally feminine traits are in this process. As I discuss later, women integrate methods of kin work into the marketplace by establishing relationships with crafters. Other scholars who study the relationship between kin work and the labor market support my findings. Martin (1997) uses the experiences of women involved in a women's alumni association to demonstrate how influential the social networks and the use of kin work was in contributing to the reproduction and growth of the college environment in a pre-bureaucratic college atmosphere. Other scholars explain the use of kin work in how women balance domestic and paid work (Wharton and Erickson 1993). Gerstel (2000) explains how "traditional women" who do not work outside the home, perform more kin work than women who are employed, therefore, elaborating on how kin work is a form of work that is dependent on available resources. Women's employment limits the amount of kin work that they can perform for friends and family members. Milkie and Peltola (1999) find women with small children have more difficulty in managing their perceived gender responsibilities, including kin work, than men with small children do. Kin work is also used to explain how women support the government's war efforts. Winchell (2004) discusses how the USO during World War II institutionalized a gender role in which women were expected to aid servicemen in completing tasks involving reproductive labor, such as sewing, and kin work, such as volunteering for gift giving services, in which volunteers would shop for and wrap gifts for servicemen's family members. The ultimate product of their involvement was that the volunteers facilitated and enabled the war effort without challenging the prevailing patriarchal order.

The majority of research on kin work highlights women's participation in the practice of kin work. Although there is a significant branch that highlights the differences and similarities

that men encounter in participating in kin work. DiLeonardo's original concept concluded that men did not participate in kin work and it was purely a gendered phenomenon. This is rebuked by several scholars who illustrate manners in which men participate in kin work that facilitates cross-household ties. Carrington (1999) writes that gay men participate in more kin work than lesbian women because gay men have greater economic and time resources at their disposal that facilitate the completion of this labor. Roy (2004a) discusses three forms of kin work that low income fathers living in Chicago participate in: living in neighborhoods that other family members reside in, therefore, facilitating their involvement with other family members, in the ways that fathers negotiate with their children's mothers and in the ways that fathers interact with their children in neutral spaces. In a separate article, Roy (2004b) describes how the provider role limits the amount of quality time, or kin work, that fathers spent with their children.

While research on the presence of kin work in families illuminates the dynamics of relationships in modern families and the influence of institutions on the performance of kin work, previous scholarship has not examined the role of consumption in the way that these relationships are maintained. My analysis explains how consumption and leisure habits play into the relationships of women and how women manipulate their time in the community so that it fills the gendered expectation of their role as a female family member. Women simultaneously fulfill their own needs with a social expectation of altruistically serving the family through the practices of the scrapbooking industry and community.

I argue that scrapbooking also functions as a form of kin work where the commercial activity is central to the performance of the gender role. During my participant observation I witnessed women performing kin work during crop sessions. When I interviewed women about how scrapbooking affected their family relationships, they explained how scrapbooking brought



them closer to their family and friends. In preliminary field work I read and analyzed the discourse of e-mail testimonials to a large scrapbooking company revealed that several of the e-mails illustrated the creation and maintenance of relational ties through the activity of scrapbooking. Many of the e-mail testimonials suggested that giving scrapbooks to other family members provided family members with a way to communicate their feelings for one another and also brought the family closer together. An example of this is one woman who described how the scrapbook brought her family together:

I started flipping through my pictures; about seven years worth; and thought how nice it would be to make a Sentiments<sup>14</sup> album for my mother for Christmas. She was coming to spend the holidays with my husband and I. The album was a collection of her visits to us and mine to her back home. Not a day goes by when she doesn't thank me through teary eyes. I know it is her most prized possession... We are beginning to act like a family again, and it all started with a 5"x7" Sentiments album.

It is clear in this example that the album functions as a way for the daughter to communicate her feelings for her mother. The creation and maintenance of family ties were facilitated through the gift of the scrapbook and the effects of the gift extended to the entire family. The symbolism contained within the scrapbook has maintained or created a family bond which is in alignment with DiLeonardo's conception of kin work. The remaining portion of this chapter will discuss how women carry out kin work during the activity of scrapbooking and how giving scrapbooks as gifts constitutes kin work.

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<sup>14</sup> A themed album of family memories.

### *Kin work during scrapbooking*

The activity of scrapbooking acts as a way for some family members to spend time together, therefore, functioning as a form of kin work through relationship maintenance. Family scholars of kin work argue that contemporary families are maintained through the conscious labor of female family members. DiLeonardo discussed that kin work was not purely altruistic and that it reflected a source of female power within the family structure. It is not a surprise then, that women must use ways that combine both their need for leisure and their perceived responsibility to maintain family relationships into the same hobby. This is exemplified in the following testimonial from the website of a large scrapbooking company. It is typical of those were thankful that scrapbooking allowed them to spend time together<sup>15</sup>:

I just wanted to thank you for giving my daughter and I a life long passtime we can enjoy doing together. We share many special moments when we scrapbook and we will always cherish our memory albums. In an age where electronics are the focus of young persons' lives, The Keepsake Company<sup>16</sup> brings us back to family time and creativity at its best.

The woman in this example is grateful for the medium of scrapbooking which allows her to develop and maintain a relationship with her daughter. Most of the e-mails indicated that scrapbooking provided family members or friends with a way to spend time together in a socially acceptable manner. As was typical of many enthusiasts, the passage explains how the hobby represents a return to what they viewed as traditional family values that encourage family unity.

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<sup>15</sup> I realize that the company is likely to publish testimonials that provide evidence of the positive aspects of scrapbooking and the companies' involvement with the hobby. The sentiment that is stated in this testimonial is mirrored by other hobbyists who spoke of the wholesomeness of the activity.

<sup>16</sup> The name of the company has been changed.

DiLeonardo also identifies the neglect of some kin ties as part of the process of kin work. There is some indication that scrapbooking illustrates how women neglect or ignore certain family ties. Scrapbooking is a selective process. Women choose whom they will scrapbook with and they select who or what material is displayed within their scrapbook. Commonly scrapbooks only incorporate positive events that occur within the family. They ignore the family conflicts and personal problems of the family members in order to mold the scrapbook into a form of discourse that promotes family harmony and unity, even if it is absent in the actual experience of the family. My research into scrapbooking explores what factors influence the decision-making process behind what women decided to include or exclude in their scrapbooks<sup>17</sup>.

For many women, scrapbooking creates a space where they can spend quality time with one another without feeling like they are neglecting their family obligations. The hobby provides a vacation from the family for some women. There are bed and breakfasts, hotel retreat weekends, conferences and even cruises solely dedicated to scrapbooking. If hobbyists cannot afford the structured weekend retreats, they will find ways to create their own scrapbook vacations. In one of my interviews Abby, a forty-eight year old mother of three children described how scrapbooking provided a way for her to vacation with her sister every year. She was quick to remark that their time spent in sisterly bonding is not complete without a trip to the local scrapbook store. She describes the two weeks that they spend together as an idyllic time for them:

My sister comes over in the summer and stays two weeks and we have marathon scrapbooking. We set up in my dining room, a table that is like a T next to my dining room table, we spread our stuff out all over everywhere, our nephews are there and they go outside and play in the pool or run in the sprinkler or play with

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<sup>17</sup> An in-depth discussion of this process is presented in Chapter 3.

the dog or go next door with the boys and the kids will take them places and my sister and I will scrapbook. We'll spend days sitting there talking, stop and fix something to eat, maybe we all of a sudden don't have something so we take a road trip to the scrapbook store.

For Abby scrapbooking provided an excuse for her to spend time with her sister. It also creates a space where they can spend time participating in a hobby that interested both of them.

The socialization offered through the hobby provides women with numerous social rewards. One of the most notable was the support of female friends and family members. Cindy was another scrapbooker who discussed the benefits of socializing with her friends while she scrapbooked. She compared the experience of scrapbooking to quilting bees where women used the practical skill of making the quilt as time to socialize with other women. The ultimate purpose of both activities was that they provided a space where women could create something for the family while celebrating their friendships. Cindy explained how important these scrapbooking sessions were to women in the community:

You sit around and talk about life. You know, and when you have pictures in front of you, "oohh, everybody, look at them! Oohh". You know, you see people's history and you want to talk about family and you want to talk about stuff. And that's what used to happen at the quilter's bees. And I think it's a new quilter's bee<sup>18</sup>. People made quilts because they had to make quilts in order to stay warm, you know, that's why they quilted. And then they found a way that

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<sup>18</sup> She was not the only hobbyist to call scrapbooking a modern form of quilting. One of the entrepreneurs that I interviewed had incorporated a quilting name into the name of her scrapbook store. She explained that this was because she strongly believed that the social networks of scrapbooking functioned as a modern quilting bee.

they could share time together because they had to make quilts and that was an active use of time and you still got to be with your friends. Well, now it's neat to have heirlooms, family heirlooms of pictures and not just boxes. You know, the older the people, unless you catch people when they're young and they don't have the boxes and boxes of pictures, people who are older are just scared to get out those boxes and boxes of pictures, they're like, "it's too late for me". That kind of idea. You know. I'm like, we'll start now and go backwards, you know. But they're just scared.... So, but I think that that's why women do it. It's kind of bred into us. (She briefly discusses her experience with quilting and then returns to the subject of scrapbooking). And that, there was a lot of talking about what's going on in your life and you know, I think a lot of that happens while you are scrapbooking too. If you've seen the opportunity to have somebody be in your life and really in it. Without being intrusive.

HEATHER: So they're kind of a third party too? A comfortable third party to that?

CINDY: You get to ask the hard questions like, "how are the finances going?" because you start to give up bits of yourself when you spend the same time with everybody all the time. It's like a small euphuism and all of a sudden you can say, "well, we are having some money problems". And then the next time you guys get together, "well how's that going?", and you know, there isn't a lot of places you can do that now in our world. But you can be real without being ashamed. Am I making any sense?

Cindy demonstrates how the hobby facilitates these relationships. The relationships that women create and maintain with one another encourages their participation in the hobby and, as exemplified in Abby and her sister's trip to the local scrapbook store, their consumption habits. The activity of scrapbooking was not the only forum for strengthening family ties that the hobby facilitated. When family members could not participate in the hobby either through circumstance or lack of interest, many women would complete a scrapbook for a family member as a gift.

#### *Kin work through gifts*

Another way that women practiced kin work through the activity of scrapbooking was in giving a scrapbook to a family member. This provided women with a justification for the time, energy and money that they spent on the hobby and it also brought in the family members into the hobby. Several of my respondents discussed how special the gift was to the recipient. While the true nature of the gift was meant to appear as a selfless act of demonstrating love for a family member, many women found that it provided them with a source of pride, attention and self-esteem.

This was clear when I spoke with Lori, a divorced mother of a middle school aged son. During our lunch interview one day she sat and described this facet of her experience with scrapbooking. One of the most meaningful aspects of her experience of the hobby was evident when she described how she used to make scrapbooks as gifts for close friends and family members. Despite monetary offers to make scrapbooks for people, she decided to only make the scrapbooks for people who are important to her.

I've done three baby books actually. And I like giving them that, because I think it's a way for them to preserve some memories that they don't know how to do it.

I've only had one person that wanted to continue and do some stuff. But the other ones, I did it for gifts because I wanted to do it. And I had some people ask me about how much I would charge, and I have no clue.

Lori's gift of making the scrapbook was an exercise of her creativity and personal power.

When it comes to estimating the time, money and labor that she put into the scrapbook, Lori cannot place a value on the scrapbook. When I interviewed hobbyists and entrepreneurs about the cost of completing one scrapbook, the most common response for a full size<sup>19</sup> scrapbook was two hundred dollars. Some women estimated as little as fifty dollars, while other estimates went to five hundred dollars. Some hobbyists would mass produce smaller scrapbooks<sup>20</sup> as gifts for family members, and this endeavor often meant that hobbyists spent less on a scrapbook (usually around ten dollars) but since they were mass produced it still resulted in women spending around one hundred dollars on the scrapbooks as a whole. This cost estimate excludes the time and labor that women put into the actual scrapbook. Completing a scrapbook is, therefore, an expensive and labor intensive process for hobbyists.

For Lori and other hobbyists like her, the gift was not merely meant to make a financial or sentimental statement because she also believed that her gift would enhance the memories and the family experience for the recipients, therefore, adding to their experience of family life. Roberta experienced family and social rewards for her early scrapbooking efforts. She crafted a scrapbook for her parent's 40<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. Roberta's scrapbook reflected various events in her parent's marriage but it also facilitated family relationships in the present. She asked family members to write letters to her parents about their memories of her parent's marriage. She used photographs that spanned her parent's marriage and demonstrated their

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<sup>19</sup> 8 1/2 x 12 or 12 x 12 inch scrapbooks.

<sup>20</sup> 3 x 5, 8 x 8 or accordion scrapbooks.

commitment to one another and their family. She explained the benefits of creating this scrapbook to me one afternoon in her office:

It was fun. As I was doing it, it was really the first one I had ever done, and so I was nervous about giving it to them, thinking, “well, maybe this is not going to look very good, maybe they’re not going to like it.” And I got it done and I thought, “well, I like this”, you know. I looked at it not too long ago, and even though it as my first one and it’s not as fancy as the ones are now, it’s just nice because it had the pictures, it tells who everybody is, it tells what we were thinking and feeling at the time...What was the best thing was, I gave it to my mom and my dad. Of course, my dad was like, “yeah, yeah, yeah, this is nice.” My mom loved it. She took it to work and they all went crazy over it. They thought it was the best thing they’d ever seen. One of the ladies took it with her to the beauty shop. Everybody at the beauty shop loved it. And, you know, I thought it was nice, but I didn’t think it was anything all that spectacular. I just thought it was a nice thing that was put together and even though I liked it, I didn’t think it would be anything anybody else would like. And that was kinda a neat.

The gift of the scrapbook simultaneously unites the family while providing Roberta and hobbyists who complete family scrapbooks, with recognition for the time and talent that they put into their scrapbooks.

I also experienced social rewards and recognition for making scrapbooks as a gift for close family members and friends. Originally I used the gift scrapbooks as projects that the scrapbooking community would find acceptable and would, therefore, allow me entrance into the



inner circles or different groups of the scrapbooking culture. Weddings are one of the most common themes for scrapbooks so the first scrapbook that I completed was a scrapbook for my best friend's wedding shower. When I gave her the scrapbook at the end of her shower, she immediately started to look through it. The scrapbook was then passed around to all the shower guests who graciously commented on the scrapbook. A few months after I presented the scrapbook to her, I was spending time with my best friend's parents and her father admitted to me that he had to stop looking through the scrapbook three times because he started to cry. Clearly the gift had important sentimental value to my friend and her family, but I also experienced personal recognition from my friend, her family and the shower guests.

I also know firsthand how the appreciation that often goes unacknowledged and unsaid in familial relationships was accomplished through the gift of the scrapbook. It was very appropriate that the last scrapbook that I completed during my field research was a Mother's Day and birthday gift for my mother. I used a themed scrapbook where each page was a different life lesson that I had learned from my mother. When I gave her the scrapbook and she saw the first pages, tears started to stream down her face. Currently, the scrapbook is prominently displayed in my parent's home. My dad has even divulged to me that every houseguest that they have is, essentially, required to look through the scrapbook. The scrapbook was a symbol of the love and appreciation that I have for my mother. I also benefited as a community member with the scrapbook when one of the other hobbyists divulged to me that she used the theme of my scrapbook as a template for her own scrapbook for her mother. I looked at this moment as a moment of status elevation where I was no longer a new hobbyist, but accepted as a hobbyist who could contribute to the community by aiding the creative process of other hobbyists. The

social rewards that I accrued through the consumption practices that I participated in during scrapbooking demonstrate the tie between consumption and kin work.

The scrapbooks were also a source of pride for women, thus proving that the work that they completed scrapbooking was not purely altruistic and allowed women to have a source of esteem for their scrapbooking skills. This was evident when I interviewed Emily, a single woman who I spoke with shortly after she completed her first scrapbook, which was a gift for a friend. Emily had worked for weeks to complete a scrapbook of her friend's wedding. She even described the days that she spent working on two pages so that they resembled her friend's wedding dress. The friend lived in another town and Emily knew that she would not see the scrapbook without a planned visit. I asked her if it was hard to part with the scrapbook and she replied that it took her a few weeks before she actually gave it to the recipient. When she finally did give it away I asked her if this was a difficult moment. She smiled at me and replied:

Yeah it was. I just said, I saw it myself, 'Well, that's a pretty good book!' I was really proud of myself. 'I did that?!'

HEATHER: Did you ever go back while you still had it, and look at it and be like, 'That's mine!'

EMILY: Uh huh. Every single day, I would look at that book two or three times. Finally I had to take it to her mother's house, saying, 'You have to have this in your house because I have to stop looking at it because I'm boasting, and I should not be doing that.'...So it went to her (the mother of the scrapbook recipient) house, and then finally her mother took it up to Cityville where she was. And then she looked through it for about ten, twelve times already when she (the recipient) has it. And she's only had it for a week!

This is similar to DiLeonardo's discovery of the power that kin work provided women. Emily's statements describe the dualistic function of the scrapbook: it provided Emily with a sense of accomplishment for her crafting abilities and it allowed her to be recognized and appreciated by two friends who were important to her. Therefore she experienced personal and social rewards from the completion of the scrapbook.

The culture also allowed women to receive an informally institutionalized sense of accomplishment for their creativity. For Emily and many of the women like her, working on the scrapbook and completing it gave them a sense of accomplishment. At many of the crops that I attended women would remark, "I can't believe that I made that!". Part of the culture also dictated that hobbyists would take a break from their own work and walk around the room to observe the work of other hobbyists. This allowed women to show off their pages without appearing to brag. The expectation was that hobbyists always provided positive feedback on the work that women had done. This was also a way that hobbyists could learn from one another's style and techniques, therefore, developing their skills and aiding the commercial aspect of the hobby. This practice gave many women the positive response that they needed in order to become a member of the community and to learn more about the hobby. It also demonstrated the effectiveness of the scrapbooking products in allowing women to achieve creative and polished results with a scrapbook tool that they would not have achieved with limited use of the raw scrapbooking materials.

### *Conclusion*

Every weekend night across the country women like Theresa and Shirley gather together with their family and friends to spend a few hours on one of their favorite

hobbies. While this appears to be a seemingly banal activity, it is actually a way that many women find and maintain bonds with other women and with other family members. The commercial activity performed through the hobby, therefore, becomes the crux of the kin work that women carry out. This chapter demonstrated how powerful the role of the scrapbooking hobby can be in forming and shaping the relationships of women. The kin work of scrapbookers is obvious in their participation in the hobby and how they involve their family relationships as part of their leisure process.

This chapter discussed the concept of kin work and how commercial activity enables hobbyists' relationships. Through providing a space where hobbyists can spend time with friends and family while they are working on the scrapbook and giving scrapbooks as gifts, commercial activity becomes integral in the creation and maintenance of female relationships. Women also reap the personal rewards of this participation and while it may appear that they are participating in the activity for the good of other family members, they are actually fulfilling some of their own needs for creativity and self-esteem. Women also feel a sense of pride in their handiwork so the activity is not purely altruistic but it also provides them with a sense of reward, accomplishment and recognition that may not be present in other facets of their lives.

## CHAPTER 5:

“If my husband knew how much money I had in scrapbooking...I may not be here”:

### Latent Power and Hidden Resistance in Scrapbooking



*This hobbyist's basement workshop is full of supplies. The shelves and bins are all packed with scrapbooks and scrapbooking products.*

Maxine Trapp is a married mother of three who works as an assistant at an accounting firm. Whenever her schedule allows, she likes to spend a Friday evening in the workshop of her local scrapbook store where she works on crafting her family photos into elaborate tributes to the time that she spends with her family. Over the course of the night, and sometimes early into the next morning, she will snack on the food that the store owner provides, chat with her friends and work on making pages for her family's scrapbook. At the end of the night, she pays for the supplies that she used and admits to me that on average she spends about twenty-five to forty dollars a session. Maxine usually spends one hundred to one hundred and fifty dollars a month on her hobby. When I ask her more about the cost she quickly adds, "If my husband knew how much money I had in scrapbooking....I may not be here". I ask her how she is able to hide the amount of money that she spends on scrapbooking and she recounts that she will pay in cash for most of it and then write a check for the rest, a form of split payment. When I inquire as to why she feels the need to do this, she says that it is to avoid confrontation with her husband and because she really wants to own the products and is concerned that her husband will encourage her to rein in the amount of money that she is spending on the hobby. So to keep her husband happy and to fulfill her desire to spend time and money on her favorite hobby, she hides the amount of money that she is spending.

Maxine's story is typical of many of the women who I talked to who are involved in the scrapbooking hobby. Over the course of my time in the scrapbooking community I witnessed dozens of women like Maxine who frequently made comments that they were not sharing the cost of their hobby with their husband or partner and that they hid this cost so that they could fulfill their needs to own scrapbooking products.

Maxine's story is an exploration into marital power. On one level she believes that she should share the cost of her hobby with her husband, but she chooses to ignore this belief so that she can fulfill her own needs. She is fully cognizant of hiding the amount of money that she spends from her husband and she believes that she is doing this for the greater good of their relationship. In this chapter I intend to explore the ways in which women hide the expense of their scrapbooking hobby from their partners and the implications that this has for theories of marital power. Women are hiding their spending as a form of hidden resistance against the latent power that men have within marriage. Part of my fascination with this topic includes not just the idea that women are hiding products and expenses, but that they are going to extreme measures to carry this out. This chapter will discuss marital power, provide evidence for the existence of men's latent power within the scrapbooking hobby, explain the ways that women hide how much they are spending on the hobby from their partners, and will offer explanations as to why women choose to hide the cost. It will conclude by discussing the future implications of this aspect of marital power for family research.

### *Marital Power*

Blood and Wolfe conducted the seminal research on marital power over forty years ago with *Husbands and Wives* (1960). The influence of their research is still felt within family studies. One of their main contributions to the discipline is how they operationalize marital power. Blood and Wolfe outline decision making as one of the primary indicators of marital power. They believe that the outcomes of decisions demonstrate who the more powerful of the partners is and it led them to conclude that the power a spouse has in marriage is determined by the resources that he or she brings into the marriage: the greater the resources, the more power a spouse has. Despite this insight, Blood and Wolfe are limited in their understanding of how

social structures determine the distribution of resources between men and women which could impact the resources that they bring into the marriage (Reiss 1971). Blood and Wolfe do not believe that patriarchy and gender roles determine marital decisions; instead they state that couples are “freed from the ‘dead hand’ of patriarchal tradition to work out their own destiny in the way best suited to them” (p. 44), therefore, while Blood and Wolfe acknowledge a power structure within marriage, they believe that it is fairly distributed between spouses and without social influence. Although Blood and Wolfe are heavily criticized for ignoring some gender dynamics within marriage (Eichler 1981; Gillespie 1971; Johnson 1975; Safilios-Rothschild 1967) and for their flawed use of decision making as the sole indicator of marital power (Cromwell and Olson 1975; Scanzoni 1979; Strauss 1977) decision making still remains one of the popular ways that researchers can measure marital power (McDonald 1980; Vogler 1998).

Recent trends in research on marital power focus on the major events of family life (e.g. pregnancy) or the daily operation of the household (e.g. division of household labor). Zvonkovic, Greaves, Schmiede and Hall (1996) use a qualitative analysis of husband’s and wife’s work and family decisions. They discover that couples’ work and family decisions still favor male power and privilege. Tichenor (1999) tries to see if wives who made more money than their husbands, and hence have greater resources to bring to the marriage, have more power in the marriage than wives who do not. Her results support the belief that gender roles, and not economic resources, dictate the distribution of power between spouses. Bittman, England, Folbre, Sayer and Matheson (2003) also came to this conclusion when they studied households in the United States and they report that the base level of housework for women was much higher than it was for men.



This body of work has expanded scholars' understanding of marital power in major events of the family life cycle and in the daily operation of the household, but one facet of married life is often overlooked by this body of research: a study of marital power and the leisure activities of men and women. Research on marital power in leisure activities covers a wide array of areas including Walker's (1996) research on how married couples control the television's remote control device and Collis' (1999) research on men's drinking activities in a mining town. These studies indicate the presence of male power within marriage. Most scholars agree, however, that research on marital power in leisure activities needs to be expanded.

### *Women, Men and Leisure*

Research on women, men and leisure demonstrates inequalities between men and women's leisure time. Shaw (1992) found that women experienced family time as both an enjoyable yet laborious experience. Family leisure activities create as much work for women as their daily household responsibilities do. Deem (1982) supports Shaw's discovery with her finding that women have less leisure time than men because of the demands of female gender roles. Wearing (1998) extended Shaw and Deem's findings and discusses the symbolic interactionist approach to the study of leisure and how women are simultaneously constrained by the gender roles imposed by society yet find freedom in their leisure activities. Henderson and Dialeschki (1991) discover that women view leisure time as a lower priority over work and family responsibilities. Mattingly and Bianchi (2003) found that women and men had different experiences of free time, where women experienced less free time and had a lower quality of free time than men did. Scholars demonstrate that women's limited time and economic resources have an impact on their experiences of leisure (Coverman 1989; Coverman and Sheley 1986; Firestone and Shelton 1994; Shaw 1985; Shaw 1986).

While several scholars have shown how women and men unequally experience leisure time and activities, Shelton (1992) finds no significant differences in the amount of leisure time that men and women have. However, this may be a result of her possibly problematic operationalization of some activities. For example, she considered canning and making preserves a hobby, when one could argue that this activity is actually a form of reproductive labor which contributes food to the family.

### *Forms of Power*

Studies of marital power were enhanced when Komter (1989) utilized Lukes' (1974) discussion of the three dimensions of power. She discussed three forms of power in marriage: manifest power, latent power and invisible power. In a later book chapter Komter (1991) discusses the basis of this research was to "uncover the power mechanisms which determine subjective preferences by looking for the hidden ideological forces which constitute women's and men's wishes concerning certain domains of their marriage" (p. 57). Her examination of power within marriage highlights the ways in which power inequalities between spouses are maintained and reinforced. Power is not always an overt and easily documented experience, instead it occurred in several manners within a marriage.

The first form of power that Komter discusses is manifest power. This form of power in marriages surfaces in "visible outcomes such as attempts at change, conflicts, and strategies" (p. 192). Manifest power is present when couples need to make decisions about their life together such as daily finances or childcare. Couples will discuss decisions openly and the outcome of manifest power is often readily apparent to each spouse. Thus, the power dynamics of manifest power are easy for scholars to analyze and explain.

Komter's second form of marital power is latent power. Latent power "can be identified when the needs and wishes of the more powerful person are anticipated, or when the reasons for not desiring or attempting change or refraining from conflict produce resignation in anticipation of a negative reaction or fear of jeopardizing the marital relationship" (p. 192). Latent power is therefore exercised when spouses anticipate each other's reactions and adjust their behavior according to the perceived expected reaction of that spouse. The weaker spouse in a particular domain is often the spouse who adjusts his or her behaviors to accommodate the other spouse and sacrifices his or her desires for the other spouse. While the discussion of latent power is enlightening, Komter does not leave a space in her discussion of this form of power to demonstrate how the disempowered spouse may react to the empowered spouse.

Komter also describes a form of power that used prevailing societal notions of gender roles and expectations. Invisible power "was defined as the result of social or psychological mechanisms that do not necessarily surface in overt behavior, or in latent grievances, but that may be manifest in systematic gender differences in mutual and self-esteem, differences in perceptions of, and legitimations concerning, everyday reality" (p. 192). Komter believes that invisible power demonstrates the existing power inequality between husbands and wives. Zipp, Prohaska and Bemiller (2004) utilize invisible power in the examination of men's and women's responses to a set of questions. They discover that women are more likely to agree with their husband's known responses than men are to agree with their wife's known responses. Zipp, Prohaska and Bemiller believe that this is evidence of the gender stereotype that women should agree with their husband's decisions while men are free to hold opinions that are not influenced by their wives. An obvious example of invisible power determining male and female roles within marriage is the prescriptions about gender roles that determine which spouse is responsible for

particular household duties (e.g. housework, childcare, labor force participation). The distribution of these duties through gender roles may privilege one spouse and disadvantage the other.

Although studies of marital power are compelling, they do not explore how one partner may resist power in marriages. Understanding how spouses resist these forms of power in marriage is especially important because it allows scholars to understand how power fully operates within a marriage.

### *Methods*

The findings in this chapter came out of interviews that I conducted with women who are involved in the scrapbooking industry and out of my four years as a participant observer in several scrapbooking groups. Studying the women who are involved in scrapbooking requires several methodological approaches. While studies of marital power are not a new field for marital scholars, studies that use a third party as a form of analysis have not been conducted. The use of a third party fills a methodological gap that has been discovered by several scholars. Lips (1981) reports that studies of decision making between married couples have a tendency to use self-report data. Olson and Rabunsky (1972) discuss the problematic nature of self-report data in studies of marriage because spouses have difficulty understanding their interactions in terms of power dynamics. They also discuss the problematic nature of the time lapse between the spousal interaction and the event in which the spouse can report on it. The final limitation of self report data and marital power studies is the perceptual bias of the spouses' understanding of the power dynamics within their marriage. They explain that most spouses, regardless of the actual power dynamics within their marriage, view their marriages as egalitarian.

In order to gain insight that did not rely on self-report data, I interviewed 24 women who were involved as business women in the scrapbooking industry. The owners reported the average sale of anywhere between twenty to fifty dollars for the occasional scrapbooker and seventy-five to one hundred and fifty dollars for the heavy scrapbooker (women who scrapbooked on a weekly basis). All of the business owners that I interviewed reported witnessing women disguising the amount of money that they spent on the hobby from their partners. One owner of a rural scrapbook store claimed that “50% of the money that comes in here is hidden money.” Choosing owners to understand marital power provides insight into an aspect of the consumption process that is untapped by scholars. The scrapbookers that I interviewed would often very reluctantly admit that they were hiding the money that they were spending from their husbands. Owners’ experiences, however, provided insight into this phenomenon without the possible bias that interviewees may demonstrate to an interviewer, thus shedding light on a previously obscured phenomenon.

I also interviewed scrapbooking enthusiasts in order to understand how they negotiated the cost of the hobby with their husbands. I was not willing to critique and analyze the dynamics of women’s marriages without allowing them a space where they could discuss this phenomenon. While I learned about this phenomenon from the store owners that I interviewed, I wanted to see how women interpreted this phenomenon through interviews with them. I interviewed 42 women who were regular scrapbookers. The majority of the women were married with children.

While the owners and hobbyists provided insight into this phenomenon, I was also able to observe it firsthand as a participant observer for the last four years as a member of several scrapbooking groups. As a participant observer, I witnessed women making regular purchases of

scrapbooking supplies and saw how their consumption practices reflected larger societal dynamics. The purchases that I viewed varied from small, under one dollar, to larger purchases that exceeded one hundred dollars. As a member of a scrapbooking group, I am aware of the range of expenses that the hobby requires. Paper, one of the basic essentials for scrapbooking, retails between twenty-five cents to over a dollar per page. Scrapbooking also requires the use of an acid-free adhesive which runs anywhere from two to five dollars a roll. The more expensive items such as totes or die cut machines can cost upwards of one hundred dollars. Scrapbooking is thus a hobby with the potential to be very cheap or very expensive. Over the hundreds of hours that I spent in scrapbook stores, I witnessed women using hidden funds to pay for their purchases or I heard women making comments, some jokingly and some seriously, about not letting their husbands know how much money they were spending on their hobby.

### *Findings*

The hobby and expenses of scrapbooking create a space where women can resist the latent power within their marriages. Although the latent power of husbands is present in the scrapbooking culture, women resist this power through how they handle their hobby finances, how they disguise their need to scrapbook and how they justify their participation. Unlike Collis, who discovered that women resist latent power in marriage by imitating male behaviors, the scrapbooking culture creates a space where women can exercise traditional femininity. For some enthusiasts this hidden resistance takes the form of hiding the amount of money that they spend on the hobby. This resistance is surprisingly fueled by two important ideologies: one of the discourses that is present within the scrapbooking culture is a discourse of addiction, and the other, the idea that creating a scrapbook and working on a scrapbook are for the good of the family.

The majority of the enthusiasts that I interviewed mentioned how their partners were supportive or apathetic about the amount of money that they spent on the hobby. Scrapbookers explained that they spent anywhere from twenty to four hundred dollars a month on supplies for their hobby. A good example of the husband's support for his wife's hobby was Pamela, a mother of two young boys. When I asked her how she negotiated the thirty dollar monthly average of her scrapbooking supplies with her husband she replied:

We were married for a good couple of months before I figured out that when he said it was ok to spend money, that he didn't think about whether or not we had the money. (laughs) So I'm really the money person in the house...But "sure whatever you want to do, I don't care"...that's what he'll say, or he'll tell me like "pay for it". He assumes that if I spend the money, we have the money to pay for it.

Many also felt justified in spending time and money on the hobby because their husbands had more expensive hobbies or spent an equal amount of money on other interests. For example, Rachel and her husband were a married couple without children. They were both actively involved in their hobbies: she is an avid scrapbooker and he is an enthusiastic hunter. She describes her husband's attitude towards the time and money that she spends on scrapbooking:

He knows how much I enjoy it. And that's...(trails off) I'm very very lucky I have a really great husband that is very supportive. And I support his hunting. He'll come down, (to the room that she uses for scrapbooking) you know if he needs to clean his gun or something he'll come down in my scrapbook room. I'll scrapbook and he'll clean his gun. We're still be together. The TV will be on or something, but you know we still do stuff downstairs together.

Rachel views gender segregated hobbies that take place in the same location as supportive and the fact that her husband does not openly object to her hobby is an indication to her that he is supportive of it.

When I asked women about the cost of the hobby and what their husband's thought about it, a common response was that women would reply with one of their husband's hobbies. "Well golfing is expensive" or "He fishes so.." A good example of a woman who used this justification was Jeanette, a married mother of three young children. Before I even formally asked her about her spending habits, she anticipated my question:

HEATHER: Yeah. So how much do you think, I know this is a big question.

JEANETTE: Oh no... the money spending.

HEATHER: The spending.

JEANETTE: I go in bursts, which is really kind of hard to. It will be a hundred dollars here and a hundred dollars there, but then I'll go for three months and not buy anything.

HEATHER: Oh, okay.

JEANETTE: So, probably five hundred dollars a year.

HEATHER: Okay.

JEANETTE: Now I compare that to my husband's hobby which is computers and for work. He can spend a thousand dollars on a computer something or other, and not blink an eye. Because it also is for work. But I don't have anything that also is for work.



Jeanette does not feel guilty for spending money on her hobby because of her husband's computer hobby, however, she also does not spend an equal amount of money on her hobby because she believed that her husband's hobby also contributed to his career.

When I asked the scrapbookers how their husbands and family members felt about their hobby, many of the women discussed instances of gift giving. Nearly all of them recalled an instance where their husband gave them an expensive scrapbooking tool. One hobbyist even worked out a schedule where she put her scrapbook shopping on hold from October until January so that her husband could buy her Christmas gifts. While these instances of husbands apathy or support of the financial costs of the hobby were present in the scrapbooking culture, some claimed that they choose not to disclose the amount of money that they spent or that they consequently hid the amount from their partners.

### *Latent Power*

Although the latent power of husbands is not obvious, after a period of time in the scrapbooking culture, the latent power of husbands becomes clear. Men were rarely present in the scrapbooking stores where I conducted my research. In the four years that I participated in weekly crop sessions, I only witnessed 2 males scrapbooking. Most often, men would enter stores to accompany their wives on quick shopping errands or they would come into the store alone in order to purchase gifts. It is fairly easy to see that the scrapbook store is a female domain: the patrons are women, the employees are women and the owners are women. While this is true, however, the presence of men is still felt in various forms. For many women, their ability to participate in the hobby is dictated by whether or not their husband is willing to watch their children. In many cases, the husband's leisure schedule took precedence over women's leisure interests. Only one of the scrapbookers that I spoke with had a formalized leisure calendar

agreement with her husband. Shelley, a mother of two adolescent children, worked out a schedule with her husband where she would spend one weekend a month scrapbooking while he watched the children, he would then spend a weekend participating in his favorite leisure activity. They would spend the other two weekends out of the month spending time with their children as a family. Shelley's egalitarian case is atypical: most of the scrapbookers worked out childcare responsibilities on a case by case basis.

Husbands would agree to watch the children under very specific circumstances, which is another demonstration of their latent power. Winnie, a mother of two grade school-aged children described the unique childcare arrangements that she made with her scrapbooking friend, Maya and their husbands:

HEATHER: So who takes care of your kids when you go to do this?

WINNIE: The husbands, in fact Joe had brought his little girl here and Maya and I went up there (referring to how she went with her friend to the scrapbook store).

HEATHER: Oh, that's nice.

WINNIE: We try to do it on a night where we know the husbands will be free so we don't have to get a babysitter.

While Winnie and Maya were not totally restricted from participating in the hobby because of childcare obligations, their husbands would only watch the children if they could watch them together, hence, their scrapbooking schedule was at the mercy of two men's demanding schedules. If the husbands were busy and they still wanted to scrapbook, then the responsibility of finding a babysitter fell on the mothers.

Other women negotiate a childcare arrangement with their husbands which limits the husbands' responsibilities. Lena, another mother of three small children said the reason why she was able to scrapbook was that her husband was not inconvenienced by her participation.

HEATHER: So when you go off and do this does Michael watch the kids?

LENA: Well we usually do it after bedtime, so yeah, they're all in bed and he works, or watches a movie which I would not enjoy, about bones being broken, crunch, smash.

The husband's responsibility towards childcare is minimized because she works her leisure schedule around the demands of her family life.

The owners that I interviewed admitted that childcare responsibilities curbed the spending habits and the time that women spent on the hobby. Beth, an owner of a rural scrapbook store, organized a scrapbook retreat weekend for her clientele every winter. I asked her about the women who attended the retreat and she acknowledged how marital power affected women's ability to scrapbook:

HEATHER: Now are these women with children?

BETH: Most of them yes.

HEATHER: So who do you think is watching the kids?

BETH: Most of them, their husbands are watching the kids. I do have a few moms that say, "Well I can't come and crop or I can't go on the retreat because I do have kids". And I just look at them and say "I have three"... Yeah, you've got a husband and he helped get them here, so he can help take care of them.

The owner acknowledges that women are anticipating the reaction of their husbands in watching the children for a weekend and therefore do not participate in the weekend scrapbooking retreat, clearly demonstrating the husband's latent power.

Latent power was also evident to the store owners who viewed husband's presence in the hobby as a hindrance to commercial activity. Store owners wanted to avoid the reaction of husbands when women were purchasing supplies. One owner explained that she used to have a chair by her cash register that she often referred to as the "husband's chair". She placed it there so that husbands or children would have a place to sit while their wife or partner shopped. After a brief period of time, she admitted that she moved the chair away from the cash register because of the subtle comments that men would make about how much their partners were spending. She also moved the chair because the reaction, and not the overt demands, of the male partner would often lead women to put items back. Therefore, in order to maximize profit, she decided to take the husband out of the situation. In this instance the store owner recognizes the power that the husband has to influence commerce and she does what she deems appropriate to resist the potential power that he has in the situation.

Other owners discussed how men affected the future buying decisions of their spouses when they entered scrapbook stores with their wives. Mary, another owner of a suburban scrapbook store, described an experience that she had observing the interaction between a young couple. It offers an example of what happens when men enter her scrapbook store:

A young couple walks in, they have a baby. The man's with her, they're shopping around, and even while she's shopping he's going, "Yeah that's nice, yeah that is." They come up, I ring it up and I say, "That will be 34 dollars," and he'll go "[gasps]." And you can just see her go, (shows a disappointed facial expression).

It's almost like, I just want to say, [whispers] "That's 34 dollars." You know, I don't. 'Cause then they walk out and they are both tight lipped and off they go.

The owner believes the wife will shop with this event in mind in the future and she will curb her spending habits due to her husband's reaction.

Latent power is an element of the leisure experience for many women. It operates within the hobby of scrapbooking to restrict women's participation in the hobby and the amount of money that they spend on the hobby. Instances like these can lead women to decide that they should not tell their spouse the cost, a definite indicator of the husband's latent power in the relationship. Women, however, do not completely give in to his power because they continue to participate in the hobby. In these instances women are primarily concerned with their own desire to consume products and feel that their participation in the hobby provides a product that can be enjoyed by the whole family. Many of the women answered my question about the time and financial expense of scrapbooking as justified because their husband may like the product of the hobby.

### *Hidden Resistance*

Husband's latent power is evident within the hobby and there is also evidence that women respond to this latent power. I found that women resisted their husbands' power by three important strategies: hiding the cost of the products, hiding the actual products and disguising the amount of money that they spent through split payment. Although women's resistance to the marital power of their husbands has been largely overlooked by scholars of marital power, Collis (1999) discovered several ways that wives during their leisure activity living in a mining town resist the marital power that their husbands exhibit. She finds that women resist men's power by imitating their activities (e.g. a girl's night of drinking). These imitations meant that women

appropriate masculine attitudes and behaviors as a means of resisting latent power. The strategies that she discusses are in response to men's leisure activities and do not illustrate how women would assert the need to fulfill themselves through their own leisure activities. She did not take into account other leisure activities that women participate in and how they may assert themselves through those activities. My investigation differs from Collis because I provide evidence of women's resistance in their own leisure activities. I also examine how women use consumption as a leisure activity.

There were several ways that women hide their purchases from their partner. One of the methods that several owners acknowledged was that women would often leave the sales receipt or ask the cashier to dispose of the sales receipt for them. Claire, an owner of a small scrapbook store in a suburban community explained how women often left the receipt:

They say, you know a couple of people who say "don't even bother with the receipt, cause if my husband saw that..." that kind of thing.

Leaving the receipt behind allowed women to avoid confrontation with her husband over the costs of her hobby and, therefore, resist any influence that he may have over her future purchasing decisions.

Physically hiding money was another way that women control the monetary resources allocated for their hobby. One of my informants would hide the amount of money that she was spending on scrapbooking by using cash to pay for all of her purchases. The money that she used was always separate from money that she allotted for other daily uses. She admitted that this allowed her an easy way to budget her hobby money but she also confessed that she knew that her husband often took money out of her wallet and this was how she could make sure that he did not take her hobby money. She kept the cash in an envelope that she hid among her

scrapbooking supplies and this allowed her to hide the amount of money that she spent. Her response to the direct way that he tries to control her spending is by resorting to covert methods to hide her purchases.

The pressure of hiding the cost also encouraged many women to alter the products that they purchased. Other women would remove the price tags from items so that their husbands would not know the cost. Adeline, a store owner of a scrapbook store in a large retail mall explained a common example of this:

Oh I've got a lady that bought, I don't know how many punches<sup>21</sup> she bought at the beginning, and her grandchildren were playing with them in the floor one day. And her husband happened to see, you know, I don't know if he was down there playing with the kid or what, but he saw how much they were. And was like, "you spent that much on that punch? You got that many of them?" So from then on she started taking price tags off of everything before she ever left the store!

Instead of curbing her behavior by abstaining from purchasing more punches in response to the latent power of her husband, she merely eliminates his area of concern. Therefore it is clear that women were not going to adjust their behavior, but only the information that they shared with their spouse. This was a clever way of maintaining their consumption patterns by resisting their husband's input.

Women also found ways to hide the products that they bought so that the physical evidence of their shopping was not evident to their husbands. During my experience I discovered that scrapbooking supplies are often small, so their presence can be easily hidden. Many of the scrapbooking enthusiasts have bags or carryalls that hold their supplies and when women

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<sup>21</sup> A common scrapbooking tool that punches shapes out of paper. They retail anywhere from \$4.95 to over \$20.00 per punch.

purchase something for their hobby they would store recent purchases in these bags or carryalls. Many of the women that I interviewed offered that they knew that their husband would not look through their bag so they could easily “hide” their purchases from their husbands, therefore allowing them to continue purchasing supplies without their husband’s knowledge.

Hiding the products took other forms as well. Some stores used clear bags to hold the products and those owners admitted to me that women would often remark that they wish that the bag was not clear or they would ask for a paper bag. Linda, an owner of a suburban scrapbook store, stated when I asked her the question about hidden purchases or spending:

You’ll hear the lady say, “Oh I really like that you guys have clear bags but that’s kinda’ a bummer for me cause now I have to leave them in the trunk until its dark and then I’ll take them in.

Other store owners recounted instances of customers who admitted to them that they left their purchases in the trunk of the car until their husbands were not home or until their husbands were asleep, at which point they would move the bags inside the house. Women would also leave items with friends, often storing them in a friend’s scrapbook room where they would easily blend in with other items. This example makes it clear that women are going to extreme lengths in order to hide their consumption patterns from their partners. It also demonstrates that women are aware of the possible consequences of these actions and will take extreme measures to avoid having to deal with them, evidence of their husband’s latent power. They respond to the latent power of their husbands by exerting their own form of resistance to it. The calculated deception demonstrates that women are still willing to exert themselves in their marriages, but that they are reluctant to overtly push for their needs.



Finally, the most popular way women hide their purchases and the amount of money that they spent on their hobby was through split payment. In split payment, women would divide the cost of their bill over several forms of payment including cash, credit card or check. When I asked one of the owners about split payment she responded to the variety of ways that women accomplished this, “we do get this, “Can I pay you 20 bucks and I’ll put the rest of the charge card?” “I’ve got 30 dollars cash; I’ll put the rest on the charge card,” or “Here’s 30, I’ll write a check.” Therefore women were able to disguise the amount of money that they spent from their husbands.

These strategies of hiding receipts, hiding money, hiding or altering the products and utilizing split payment serve as a covert way that women resist the latent power of their husbands. They anticipate how their husbands will respond to their expenses so they avoid confronting them with this information. Women see these actions as justifiable because they are providing invaluable resources for the family.

#### *For the Good of the Family*

Women feel justified in the time and financial expense of scrapbooking because they view the product as providing invaluable memories for their family. Their resistance to latent power is funneled through the consumption process, where they are able to provide an invaluable document for their family. Hillary, a thirty-seven year old, married mother of a nineteen year old boy, a nine year old girl and a three year old boy had an experience that was typical of many scrapbookers: she felt that the scrapbook filled memory gaps that her mother could not. Hillary felt that most of her childhood memories were lost because her mother did not keep photos of the family:

In so many ways, I do feel like it fills a void. I feel like I'm giving them something that I didn't see. And I think that's the biggest gift that you can give your child. As a parent, to give them the things that you felt were missing, or holes in your life, to fill those holes up for them, so they don't have that same sunken feeling like something is missing. And not that I didn't have a great childhood, it's just that I wish, I mean like now I would do anything to be able to just have those pictures, but they're gone. You know what I mean? It's great because my friend did a scrapbooking album and she had her and her husband's pictures from kindergarten all the way up to the present, and it's an incredible thing to see, but you know, I don't have that option. But my kids do. And they love it. Even my oldest, who's nineteen, him and his friends, when he was still at home, they would come in and I'd be scrapbooking and they'd say "let me see the scrapbook, let me see the scrapbook", and he's a boy. He cares and he appreciates it. So it's weird because like for my birthday, that's what he sends me, he sends me his pictures from school, so I can create, I'll create a scrapbook for him for his college years, and he saves the stubs when he goes to a concert, or they have something special at school, and he sends it to me. So, I don't know if it's for the purpose that, you know, they know I'll create something for them or if he just knows that it means a lot to me. That's the biggest thing I think is that to create those memories and capture them and that they'll be there, kept sacred, keep safe for the kids, you know.

Hillary views the amount of time and money that she spends on scrapbooking as providing a necessary experience of family for her children. The activity allows her to communicate with her

son on a level that she would not be able to do in other circumstances. Any type of creative deception that she performs with the costs associated with the hobby are for the greater good of serving her family.

While the women who hide their spending see a larger purpose in this deception, other hobbyists acknowledge that this may be problematic for family relationships. Some hobbyists are fully aware of women hiding the amount of money that they are spending on the hobby and acknowledge that this may place a strain on family relationships. When I asked Patricia, a part-time employee at a local scrapbook store and an avid scrapbooker, if anything surprised her about her job at the store, she stated:

One thing I noticed a ton of, and maybe it's just that I work a couple days a night, I mentioned it to the two other women here that were working, and they said, "oh yeah, this happens all the time." And I was just shocked. All these women, they come in and spend in multiple ways, you know, so they'll charge a part, they'll pay cash a part, and they'll write a check for part of it. They just warned me that people do that. Some people, you know, don't have money for food but they come in with a scrap habit or something, I don't know. I was as shocked at the amount of women who said "don't tell my husband. "Shh! Don't tell my husband!" or they're not feeling bad when they're saying, "Ok, I'm gonna pay a little bit on cash and a little bit on check."

She went onto explain that she believed that women were lying about their spending habits and that within a good marriage (as she defined it) women would share their hobby with their husband and they would not let their spending get out of control.

### *Discourse of Addiction*

The scrapbooking industry encourages the compulsion to spend money and participate in scrapbooking. One of the common responses of the hobbyists when I asked them about the hobby is that they found it incredibly addictive. Women found that they could easily spend several hours scrapbooking and that once they started a scrapbook that it was easy to get pulled into the routine of the hobby. It was also easy to get pulled into the routine of spending money on the hobby. Stores find ways to encourage customer's spending habits. The most common method that scrapbook stores used was to issue punch cards to its clientele. The punch cards marked off the cost of the purchases and after the card was completed (usually after the customer spent two to three hundred dollars) then she received twenty dollars in free merchandise. The punch cards promoted loyalty among the clientele, but they also encouraged women to spend more money in order to receive a full punch.

The industry is also aware of the discourse of addiction and will produce items that cutely portray this addiction. Stickers will say "Addicted to Cropping" or "Scrap-a-holic". One of the stores that I visited had the "Scrapbook Addict Board" (see photo below) prominently displayed in the workshop area. The board was divided into sections with the names of women placed on colorful cards. Women who had spent over a thousand dollars at the store were placed on the highest end of the continuum and women who had spent at least two hundred dollars were at the other. Instead of framing the exorbitant spending of hobbyist as problematic, the store owner realized that she could make the addiction a source of motivation for women to spend more money at the store. It also made the addict club an elite experience. While women may use the belief that what they are doing is for the good of the family, it is clear that the industry exploits this rationalization.



*The scrapbook addict board. To the far right, the white squares represent the women who have spent over a thousand dollars at this particular store.*

### *Conclusion*

Theories of marital power highlight decision-making as a determinant of which partner has more power in the relationship. Through an analysis of the spending habits of some women, we observe that the expected reaction of the spouse has an impact on the consumption decisions that women make. This expected reaction, however, is not enough to stop some women from spending money and purchasing products. Instead they merely find ways of hiding the products and costs from their husband. While this research is limited because it only studied women who are involved in the leisure activity of scrapbooking, it provides insight into how women negotiate the power structure within their marriage in order to provide for their own needs as well as how they may justify their actions through a discourse of family. Further research in the area of gender and marital power will illustrate whether or not women use hidden resistance to provide for some of their other needs within the marriage.

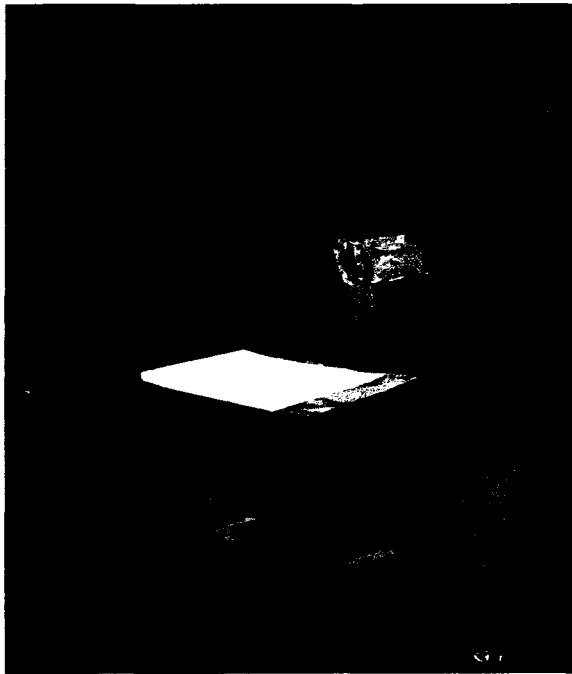
The implications for family research are ongoing and prove that women are cognizant of the power dynamic and gender roles within their marriage. Women are asserting their own form

of power by resisting this structure. This is a form of hidden resistance on the part of hobbyists to their husband's latent power. Women acknowledge the patriarchal power of their husbands but they are not willing to succumb. This indicates what Hochschild (1990) deemed a gender strategy where feeling and action fuel our gender ideologies in everyday situations. My research discovered several covert ways that women attempted to hide their spending habits from their husbands, indicating that women may use hidden resistance as a gender strategy. Clearly women are aware of the consequences that their decision-making actions have, however, they are not confident sharing this information with their husbands and prefer to find ways of hiding their actions from their husbands. Instead of discussing the amount of money that they would like to spend, they resort to covert means in order to preserve their spending habits and exert their own power within the marriage. Women are therefore exercising their own power within the marriage. Cloward and Piven (1979) discussed female deviance as a reaction to social stress. In their case this small form of deviance is a reaction to female stress within marriage. While deviance is a reaction to this stress, it is also the means through which women feel empowered and advance their own agenda. Their choice to hide their actions is not without the gender expectations that lead women to believe that they must sacrifice their own needs in order to provide for their family's interests.

## CHAPTER 6:

“You have to treat it like a child”:

### The Role of Gender in Female Entrepreneurship



*An instructor demonstrates the techniques of the hobby to new enthusiasts.*

On Friday mornings Susan Edwards gets up early to drive 45 minutes to the small business she owns. She opens the doors at 10 a.m. and by noon the store is full of women who are looking for supplies, or browsing on their lunch breaks. The afternoon sees a steady stream of students and stay-at-home moms. At 5 p.m., when many businesses close for the day, Susan greets her next group of customers who have come in to work on their craft projects. During the busy time of year, as many as twenty women will sit and work on the folding tables in her workshop area. Over the course of the evening Susan will feed them, special-order products for them, and listen to their stories of family life. She finally closes the store around 1 a.m., but admits that she would stay later if some of the women wished to remain. She has been known to spend the night at the store but tonight she returns home exhausted, starting the whole process again the next morning. Susan's experience is typical of a new breed of female entrepreneurs, women who own stores in the fastest growing hobby industry: the scrapbooking industry. Susan is the perfect embodiment of the successful scrapbook business owner. She has a good sense for business, and the physical and emotional stamina to forge and maintain the social ties with her customers that are necessary in order to retain a loyal clientele. Susan enacts what I term gendered commerce, a form of business practice in which a gender role is central to selling products or services.

Susan is one of several hundred new entrepreneurs who own scrapbook stores in the United States. Scrapbooking is so popular that Neff (2003) reports that 20% of households in the United States have scrapbooks. Not only is the product of the hobby found in households across the United States, but scrapbooking also has a large economic impact. Estimates describe the industry as having about \$2.5 billion dollars in merchandise and assets (Bellafante 2005). The



popularity of this hobby has engendered a large number of small businesses that focus on selling scrapbooking materials and offering classes on scrapbooking techniques. The Hobby Industry Association estimates that there are 2,500 scrapbooking stores in the United States (Ethridge 2003). The size, significance, and popularity of this hobby has had an undeniable impact on many people, including the women who run and manage the scrapbook stores, the women who participate in the hobby and the families who are memorialized in the products.

In this chapter I draw from Zimmerman and West's (1987) concept of "doing gender" to explore the ways that female entrepreneurs consciously and unconsciously utilize traditional norms of femininity in the daily operation of their scrapbooking businesses. West and Zimmerman's theory of doing gender argues that gender is not an inherent but learned process of socialization through the continued re-enactment of gender roles. Women and men learn a set of roles that are ascribed to their biological sex. If gender inequality is present within a society, then these inequalities will be present in gender roles and will be reproduced in every day interactions. This concept is relevant to the experiences of women who run their own businesses because it helps to explain how and why these women face structural disadvantages and discrimination<sup>22</sup>. The concept of doing gender also explains how people experience some privileges from the expectations that are associated with gender roles (Kaplan 2001). In applying this concept to the predominately female scrapbooking industry, I investigate how scrapbook entrepreneurs do gender and how this performance works to the advantage of their business. I

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<sup>22</sup> For a discussion of the symbolic nature of doing gender as a female entrepreneur read Bruni, Attila, Silvia Gherardi, and Barbara Poggio. 2004. "Doing Gender, Doing Entrepreneurship: An Ethnographic Account of Intertwined Practices." *Gender, Work and Organization* 11:406-429. They analyze the symbolic nature of gender in two Italian entrepreneurship including two women who own an engineering firm and a group of gay men who own a gay male magazine. While the authors include a discussion of doing gender in entrepreneurship, they conceptualize gender as situated practices, where I view doing gender as a seamless process for female entrepreneurs.

will demonstrate how traditionally<sup>23</sup> feminine conduct and practices informs and enhances the business practices of female entrepreneurs, which I conclude, is gendered commerce.

### *Sociological Research on Female Entrepreneurs*

Women's experiences in small businesses inform sociological research on female entrepreneurs. The study of the success and failure rates of female-owned businesses as compared to male-owned businesses is the most popular way that female entrepreneurship is studied (Boden and Nucci 2000; Kalleberg and Leicht 1991; Merrett and Gruidl 2000; Rosa, Carter, and Hamilton 1996; Watson 2003). Many of these studies discover that female-owned businesses are more likely to fail. Common misconceptions surrounding female entrepreneurship attribute the greater failure rate to women's poor business skills or lack of experience in business. However, scholars find that the failure rate is often dependent on the availability of resources. Women starting their businesses tend to have fewer resources than men. Some explanations of this lack include the structural discrimination women face (e.g. being denied loans from banks and encountering discrimination from contractors). This branch of research demonstrates the discriminatory stratification that female entrepreneurs suffer from within the business world, but other areas of study offer different readings.

There is conflicting academic research on the extent of the structural discrimination that female entrepreneurs face. Some research on women in small businesses finds that women tend to under-perform their male counterparts in sales and business growth (Anna, Chandler, Jansen, and Mero 2000; Cliff 1998; Fasci and Valdez 1998; Fischer, Reuber, and Dyke 1993). Explanations for this include discrimination encountered from clients, the fact that female entrepreneurs are concentrated in the retail and service industries, and the disadvantages incurred from women's socialization. These findings on female entrepreneurs' under performance

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<sup>23</sup> I used traditional in the sense of how men and women are stereotypically portrayed in US culture

contrasts with those of other scholars (DuRietz and Henrekson 2000; Watson 2002) who find no significant differences between the sales performance of men and women when controlling for certain variables such as education and previous business experience.

Another area of research on female entrepreneurship seeks to understand the different motivations for engaging in entrepreneurship and expanding the businesses of men and women (Bowen and Hisrich 1986; Cromie 1987; Fillmore 1987; Goffee and Scase 1985; Schwartz 1976; Smith, Smits, and Hoy 1992; Weiler and Bernasek 2001). There are several debates about why women decide to own their own business. Some scholars suggest that entrepreneurship allows women job flexibility so that they can better manage their responsibilities towards their families and towards their career (Cromie 1987). Other scholars speculate that entrepreneurship allows women to escape the glass ceiling that they encounter in other professional sectors -- that entrepreneurship allows women to excel without the structural discrimination that they often face in the business world (Birley 1989; Scott 1986). These studies, however, do not account for which motivations predict the success or failure of female-owned businesses.

Family networks also have an impact on the motivations and success of female entrepreneurs. Loscocco and Leicht (1993) discover that the marital status of women and the presence of children affect the earnings of female entrepreneurs, with women who were married with children earning less than their male counterparts. Single women with children, however, earn as much as their male counterparts. They conclude that the provider role is the motivation for single women's success in business. The study is somewhat limited because the family situations of these entrepreneurs were not fully assessed in their methodology. In contrast, Renzulli, Aldrich and Moody (2000) report that the presence of family members in the business, and not the gender of the owner, creates critical disadvantages for the entrepreneur. They find

that the higher the proportion of kin in the entrepreneur's network, the less likely that they are to start and maintain a business. These studies provide evidence that family networks influence the success of female entrepreneurs. Therefore the structural difficulties that female entrepreneurs face include not just discrimination from the business world, but conflicts over the roles that women fill in the family and the inclusion of family members in the business.

Extending this research, several scholars focus their research on understanding the barriers that prevent female entrepreneurs from succeeding (Hisrich 1989; Hisrich and Brush 1984; Hisrich and O'Brien 1981; Loscocco and Robinson 1991; Loscocco, Robinson, Hall, and Allen 1991 1991; Ridgeway 1997). Many of these studies reveal that women encounter structural disadvantages in the operation of their businesses. Women are still limited to traditionally female-typed fields and they still lack access to government contracts. A lack of strong social networks and structural discrimination prove to be the largest obstacles that female entrepreneurs face, and these obstacles often prove devastating to the businesses, leading them to be less profitable than male-owned businesses.

Research on female entrepreneurs also critiques their management techniques (Rosa, Hamilton, Carter, and Burns 1994; Smith, McCain, and Warren 1982). Cuba, Decenzo and Anish (1983) report that women have difficulties in delegating tasks and in leading others which is detrimental to the success of their businesses. DeCarlo and Lyons (1979) find specific personality traits that identify women who could be successful female entrepreneurs. An analysis of these personality traits reveals that they are personality traits that are often male-identified (e.g. aggression and leadership). Most of the research in this area argues that female entrepreneurs are different from male entrepreneurs and that women who are stereotypically feminine are placed at a disadvantage in the business world of entrepreneurship.

These conclusions are mirrored in books that discuss the strategies of women who are successful in a male-dominated business world (Ash 1984; Catalyst 2000; Coughlin 2002; Enkelis and Olsen 1995; Wymard 1999). Most of this research investigates women who are in top management positions and it discusses how women have had to take on traditionally masculine qualities in order to succeed within the business world. While this is helpful and informative in understanding the experiences of female entrepreneurs, it is not indicative of the experiences of all female entrepreneurs. Scrapbooking is an industry that is primarily owned and operated by women, but seems far less affected by structural discrimination. My observations do not indicate that women need to take on stereotypically masculine qualities to succeed when they deal with female clientele.

All of the research above broadens our understanding of part of the obstacles and discrimination that women experience as entrepreneurs in the business world. While scholars hope that this research aids entrepreneurial women, their conclusions may not be applicable to women who own small businesses. My preliminary field research has revealed that many scrapbook entrepreneurs do not have traditional training in business management and techniques (Fantin 2005; Harris 2002; Mikus 2002), and most of these studies overlook how female entrepreneurs run their businesses on a daily basis. Analyzing female entrepreneurs' actions in the context of their business allows scholars to gain a better understanding of their situation and how they enact gender roles in the maintenance of their stores.

Another area often under-researched is qualitative inquiry into female entrepreneurs' actions in the store environment. Quantitative analyses of female entrepreneurship often focus on outcomes of the experience (e.g. if the businesses succeeds or fails, the profits of the business within a certain time period), while qualitative inquiry can illuminate the processes women

undergo as female entrepreneurs. Previous scholarship undoubtedly proves that gender is a factor in the operation of businesses and scholars need to understand how gender enters into the business. Scholars also need to understand whether or not gender enhances or hinders the experiences of female entrepreneurs.

Consumption practices are dependent, it least in part, on relationships between people. The power of these relationships in influencing the consumer behaviors of hobbyists is untouched by mainstream consumption and business research. In this chapter, I provide an explanation for how gender influences consumption practices. Scholarship has not fully determined the extent to which gender plays a role in the experiences of female entrepreneurs and their clientele. I argue that women retain their gender roles and utilize them to the benefit of their business - a concept that I term “gendered commerce”. I found that women actively utilize traditionally feminine practices in the operation of their business, and this makes the business more appealing to their customers. While this conduct is useful in a primarily female industry, it also may help to explain why women are disadvantaged in traditionally male industries.

### *Methods*

To understand how scrapbook store owners perform gendered commerce, I conducted interviews with owners and customers and acted as a participant observer for four years. I conducted interviews with 21 women who own scrapbook businesses in the Midwest, one manager of a corporate scrapbook store and two women who participated in direct-selling organizations that sold scrapbooking supplies. All of the store owners whom I interviewed were white, middle-class, and all were married with children. All the owners had at least a high school education, a few had some college, and four of the women had college degrees, two of whom had business degrees. I conducted all of the interviews in their stores both for the convenience of

the owner and to get a feel for how they interacted with employees and customers. This strategy helped me to understand how female entrepreneurs performed gendered commerce.

Traditionally female practices have an effect on the consumers' experiences. In order to understand the power of their approach on the consumer, I interviewed 42 women who regularly scrapbooked in local scrapbook stores because I was interested in seeing if the gender norms that some of the owners practiced were acknowledged by their customers. Of the women that I interviewed, 38 of them were self-identified as white or Caucasian while 4 of them self-identified as black or African-American. The majority of the women were married with children. Their frequency in participating in the hobby ranged from a few hours every few months to several sessions a week. They spent anywhere from five dollars to four hundred dollars a month on the craft. Scrapbookers were able to provide insight into the success of gendered commerce, insights that I could not acquire from interviews with the store owners. The interviews also enabled me to understand the importance of the hobby in the lives of these women and how instrumental the store owner was in their experiences with the hobby.

I wanted to understand these business practices from the customers' perspective so I also acted as participant observer in a few scrapbook groups for four years. At least twice a month since I began my field research, I attended crop sessions<sup>24</sup> at several scrapbook stores within the Midwest. I purchased scrapbooking products, read the trade magazines, watched scrapbooking television programs on shopping channels and on public broadcasting, and looked into scrapbook vacations. This research allowed me to have a solid understanding of the experience as a consumer and crafter. I also viewed and experienced gendered commerce by the owners and saw

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<sup>24</sup> Crops are periods of time, usually 6-8 hours on Fridays or Saturdays, when hobbyists work on their projects within the store. These sessions allow people to buy products as they work and learn new craft techniques from store owners, employees or other hobbyists.

how powerful it was in engaging the consumer in the hobby and in encouraging the hobbyist to spend money.

### *Findings*

After four years of participant observation, 24 interviews with women who were involved in the scrapbooking industry, and 42 interviews with women who scrapbook and frequent scrapbook stores, I found three main ways that owners do gender and participate in gendered commerce in the operation of their businesses. The first is that scrapbook store owners imitate forms of reproductive labor in the operation of the business. The second way that they perform gendered commerce is reflected in their attitudes towards maintaining the business. The final way that they exercise gendered commerce is in the nurturing of their clientele by providing their expertise along with emotional comfort. Each of these findings illustrates how gendered commerce is enacted within the daily operation of the business to the benefit of the business.

#### Imitating reproductive labor

Many store owners engage in traditionally female reproductive labor in the maintenance of their businesses. This engagement manifests itself in several ways. One of the most common is that owners provide food for their clientele. Store owners always offer treats for evening crop sessions. Sometimes this simply means ordering pizza, but many other times the owner will go home and prepare a meal, often an elaborate spread, and return to the store with it for the clientele. One of the owners, a former caterer, would prepare elaborate sit-down meals for her clientele. She referred to as these events as “Crop and Dines” and admitted that these crop sessions were very popular and sold out months in advance. Another scrapbooker who worked as an employee at a store noticed that the crop sessions would only fill up if food was included. When I asked her why she thought this was so, she replied, “there is something about women



and food!” Food and its obvious connection to traditional femininity, then, is one tactic that owners use to engage women in the hobby. Here the service provided by the traditionally feminine practice of providing food draws a crowd into the store, transforming the commercial activity into a form of gendered commerce.

At times, food reflected the creative abilities of the owner which is vital in a creative industry. One owner planned themed meals each month. Her last two themes were the “Academy Awards” and “Mardi Gras” and the owner explained to me how she incorporated the theme into the decorations, food and promotions in the store. She believed that the themes promoted loyalty in her clientele. One of the crops that I attended was on a weekend before Valentine’s Day. The owner placed a place card, a heart candle favor, and Valentine’s candies at each person’s workspace. As the women entered the work area, they were immediately drawn to their spaces. Throughout the night they made comments about how cute the work space was and how much it reminded them of grade school Valentine’s Day parties. Planning and carrying out a themed crop is important because it displays the creative abilities of the owner, a necessity in an industry where creativity is an essential element of the consumption experience. Customers thoroughly enjoyed the food provided at the crops and would often ask for the recipe or joke about ignoring their diets. The food and occasional themes at the crops made the time spent there an event, more than simply time spent working on the craft. However, food performed other functions at crops as well.

I witnessed how powerful the ritual of eating with others was in creating a sense of community. Women would gather around food tables. The food promoted conversation, afforded a break from the craft, and sometimes, served as a symbol of celebration. During my own participant observation there was an evening when one of the regular scrapbookers had a

birthday. Midway through the evening, the owner came out with a home made birthday cake and all of the women sang to her. The customer was quite moved, smiling shyly as she wiped tears from her eyes. Food communicated the owner's appreciation of her client and demonstrated to the scrapbookers her willingness to provide for them. It also provided incentive to some of the non-regulars to become regulars and join the scrapbooking community. Several of the hobbyists admitted that celebrations and theme crops made them feel welcome and accepted in the scrapbooking community.

Providing food imitates reproductive labor from the home and reinforces the relationship between the owner and crafter. It unites, it communicates, and it encourages women to shop at the store. Feeding customers is a terrific sales tactic: it keeps customers in the store for longer periods of time, since they do not have to leave to eat lunch or dinner; it serves as an incentive to come to weekly crop sessions; it bonds the owner to the customer; and it creates a sense of loyalty and community among the clientele. Gendered commerce is, therefore, dependent on the relationships that are created by the reproductive labor. Without the popularity of the crops and the subsequent camaraderie that are the result of them, the hobby would not be as popular with women.

Another area in which these business women imitate reproductive labor is in their attitudes towards childcare. Stores have play areas where children can play while their mothers shop. Owners and employees often watch children so that mothers can shop without distraction. Several store owners explained to me that the reasoning behind childcare as twofold: it allows women to stay in the store longer and perhaps spend more money (one of the reasons that women left the store was to pacify bored children); and it keeps children from playing with store products. Preserving inventory from curious children without alienating the parents turns out to

be an important aspect of running the business. Many owners recalled instances of unsupervised children who destroyed merchandise. Owners explained that parents paid for the damage but were less likely to return to the store or visited less frequently. Play areas also meant that women with children would not hesitate to bring their children in the store, an important feature in a hobby where many women have young children. Here, reproductive labor is successfully incorporated into the business and to the benefit of the bottom line creating a form of gendered commerce.



*A young boy uses the play area while his mother shops and scrapbooks.*

Reproductive labor also sustains consumer relations through gift giving promotions. Scrapbookers explained that their friends and family knew to purchase scrapbook products as gifts for holidays. Store owners send postcard reminders to husbands and other family members

when an important holiday or birthday is coming. During the holiday season, store owners encourage women to make a wish list and put it on file at the store. Family and friends then go to the store to check the wish list, making holiday shopping that much easier. In stores without a formal gift registry, owners and scrapbookers recalled instances in which family members asked the owner what the scrapbooker would like for a gift. These examples illustrate the ways in which store owners facilitate relationships between family members while profiting from them through gift giving purchases. In short, store owners aid the customers and bring business into the store. This form of the traditionally feminine role of reproductive labor again enables store owners to profit.

### Nurturing

Another way in which female business owners participate in gendered commerce is through the traditionally feminine trait of nurturing. The feminine gender norm of nurturing is manifested in two ways: in the attitudes that owners have towards their businesses and in their treatment of their customers. Their nurturing attitude towards their business is obvious. The business owners often referred to their store as a “child,” and the majority of the owners I spoke with found it difficult to leave their stores, spending from ten to fifteen hours a day working. The understanding about this time and effort was that it was necessary for personal and financial success. Their attitudes reflected an understanding of delaying the financial immediate gratification of operating a business in order to take care of the long term needs of their business. As one store owner told me:

So if you’re gonna enter into owning something, you have to first love it as a child because you’re gonna have to nourish it. You’re gonna have to treat it like a

child. I mean, you can't just walk into it thinking, 'oh man. I'm gonna make a million. It is a twelve billion dollar industry.

The female entrepreneurs I interviewed believed that the business needed a great deal of their attention and energy if it was going to prosper and the concept of nurturing clearly underwrote their understanding of running their business.

The store owners believe that their patrons should be nurtured just as much as the business. One of the most obvious acts of nurturing is providing customers with food. The physical and emotional comfort that this act provides women is discussed in the previous section. The nurturing that owners provide clients also involves developing their scrapbooking skills. The act of scrapbooking requires enthusiasts to learn new techniques and skills, therefore, owners often personally instruct their clients about how to master the intricate techniques. When I first started my participant observation I had a very limited understanding of the craft. Over time, I learned how to scrapbook from several store owners, employees, and other scrapbookers. Teaching the scrapbooking skills to the customer enhances the customer's experience but also enhances the ownership experience on a personal and financial level. Owners told me of several instances in which they derived personal satisfaction from developing the crafters' abilities. As one owner of a small, rural store stated:

Honestly, the biggest thing was that I felt like it was my responsibility to the community because I think women really underestimate their creativity and their voices.

The owner's attitude of providing a creative space for the women in her community was central to her experience of running a business. The desire to be of service to the female

community goes unnoticed by scholars of business who assume that women enter into business solely to profit financially.

When I asked another owner about her scrapbook teaching experiences she commented that she felt that women were empowered by learning the craft. She stated,

I was teaching a class in Springfield and I think there were more than twenty people there, and it was a very creative exercise where you went through and you started with this really basic technique and from there you kinda free-flowed. I think it was like ten techniques so you used a lot of different tools. And, at one point, I heard one of the women in the class, “I can’t believe I am making this layout” and she was like teary-eyed, and she couldn’t believe she was making this.

The empowerment that the owner and the customer experienced acted as motivation for both of them. One of the benefits of gendered commerce is that it allows women to develop their abilities and to enjoy the empowerment that they experience from the owner-client interactions while allowing entrepreneurs to sell products.

Store owners told me that taking care of people is an important part of the scrapbooking culture. If you did not give the clientele good customer service, they explained, either in helping them with a new technique or by listening to them, then the experience would be diminished for both the owner and patron. Teaching the women scrapbooking skills also introduced a new line of products to the scrapbooker, increasing profitability for the owner. The relationship between the owner and crafter was an integral aspect of keeping hobbyists involved in the hobby. Personal relationships proved to be another way that traditionally feminine traits benefited the business. Gendered commerce, therefore, encompasses personal and financial benefits.

## Emotional comfort

The final way in which female entrepreneurs participate in gendered commerce is the emotional comfort they provide their clients. By emotional comfort I mean times when owners listened to clients' problems, offered advice or aided women in completing a project of special significance. In many of my interviews and in my own experience this was one of the most powerful aspects of the hobby for both scrapbookers and owners. One of the most interesting aspects of my interviews was the stories of the personal connection between owners and their clientele. When I asked store owners to talk about their most memorable experience with a client, 19 of the 24 I interviewed told of an instance in which they provided emotional comfort. In part, because scrapbookers work on projects that involve the people and major events of their lives, the scrapbooking culture is generally often emotionally charged. As the women look for ways to craft their family pictures, crafters' personal lives easily become part of the conversations between crafters and owners.

Some store owners became emotionally comforting on a fairly regular basis. One owner had been a union representative before she started her scrapbook store and admitted that her previous job required her to be tough and unemotional while owning the store required her to be the opposite. She recounted to me,

There isn't a week that goes by without someone that just shares something with you. You have to give them a hug or just walk quietly up front and talk to them for awhile. I mean, you end up kind of being a counselor.

The owner's involvement with the customer bonds them. On another occasion, an owner started to cry while she told of helping a customer to make a scrapbook for a mother who was dying. The owner described her profound emotional involvement that developed in helping to complete

the scrapbook before her customer's mother passed away. In these instances, owners help women cope with life, become involved in worthwhile relationships, and create business for themselves. The commercial activity is not only centered on the exchange of goods and services but it also tied to the relationship between the owner and customer.

Owners recounted these stories of personal interaction with a great sense of purpose. The emotional comfort is greatly appreciated by the customers. When I asked some customers of a local scrapbook store if the owner was important to their experience at the store, they all answered with a resounding "yes". One client declared that, "Beth is like the mother that I never had." She went on to discuss how her own mother was not a part of her life and the owner filled a large void. When I asked the scrapbookers if the owner made the store more appealing or if the customer felt indebted in some way to the store, most agreed, and we discussed an instance where the owner had aided them as a hobbyist or with a personal problem. The traditional norm of nurturing and support exhibited in the owners clearly prompted some customers' dedication and loyalty to the store.

Another owner suggested that she felt her store filled an emotional gap for women in the community. Earlier that day, a regular customer had come into the store and before she had informed her family, told the owner that she had cancer. She told the owner that she did not know where else to go; she was not ready to tell her family yet. The owner recounted how typical and important these clients were to her experience of running the store. In this case the emotional comfort the owner offers the customers also serves as motivation and benefit of running the business, two elements often overlooked by scholars who do research on female entrepreneurs. The business acts as a way for women to have emotional needs fulfilled while



participating in a commercial activity. Through gendered commerce, customers gain a skill, receive emotional comfort and, experience friendship.

### *Conclusion*

These observations shed light on the experiences of female entrepreneurs. Imitating reproductive labor in the maintenance of the business, nurturing the business and the clientele and providing emotional comfort for the clientele, exemplify how women perform gendered commerce. This research allows for an understanding of the ways that traditionally feminine norms and practices can positively enhance businesses for women; however, it can also be an indicator of the limitations that women face in the business world.

The fact that reproductive labor is helpful to some business practices legitimates the value and expertise of certain forms of gender-coded conduct. In providing food, childcare, and gift giving promotions, reproductive labor created a loyal clientele for the business and maximized the amount of money that scrapbookers spent in the store. The traditionally feminine gender norms and traits encouraged women's participation in the hobby and created a sense of community among them. It is clear that this commercial activity relies on expectations about gender roles in order to engage women in the hobby and sell products, therefore, becoming a gendered form of commerce.

Their attitudes towards nurturing their business and clientele demonstrate that women successfully integrate feminine norms in their business endeavors. This evidence contradicts previous research that concludes women must keep their feminine attitudes and practices from their business operation. I discovered that nurturing also helps to incorporate new customers into the hobby and retain the hobbyists already involved. The owners' belief in the nurturance of their business influences the amount of time and effort that they put into their business. As with

reproductive labor, nurturing the scrapbooking skills of hobbyists enables owners to sell more products, benefiting the profitability of the business.

Women use emotional comfort in order to retain a loyal customer base and to gain a sense of satisfaction. Hobbyists can go to large chain stores to purchase supplies, but large chain stores cannot provide customers with the personal attention of small store owners. In several of my interviews, I asked store owners if they felt threatened by large chain stores. The majority of them replied that they did not because they knew that their customers were not having their needs met at these stores. The camaraderie, personal attention and instruction were lacking at the large chain stores. In all of these instances, personal interactions have enhanced the bottom line. Many of the crafters agreed that they felt indebted to the store owner because of their relationship with her. Others remarked that they would shop at the large chain stores but would save specialty item purchases for the local stores, in part because they could learn how to use the products at the store. The emotional ties fill a void, indebting them yet further to the store. In this sense, emotion is commodified. This mirrors Hochschild's (1983) finding on how and why female flight attendants manage their emotions. Unlike the flight attendants, who were encouraged to manage their emotions by the structure of the airlines, female entrepreneurs unconsciously utilize their emotions to aid their clients, which in turn aids their business.

The significance of these findings is far reaching. When women remain within their gender roles and apply them to certain businesses, they can successfully integrate traditionally feminine roles and practices into their businesses and their business is enriched by it. This is a consequence that is not acknowledged in research on female entrepreneurs. Gendered commerce demonstrates that performing gender entices customers. Scrapbooking is a limited industry to examine, however, because it is primarily owned, operated and enjoyed by women. It would

appear that exercising gendered commerce is not terribly successful in industries that are not run by and for women and that exercising feminine traits hinders some female entrepreneurs in the operation of their businesses (Brush 1992). This is supported by Biggart's (1989) research on women in direct-selling organizations. She found the feminine traits and ideologies were accepted in direct-selling organizations that were marketed towards women. She concluded that these organizations did not challenge the prevailing patriarchal business system and were therefore limited in their influence and power.

Consumption practices are reliant on women like Susan Edwards who are willing to forge and maintain relationships with their clientele. In this way, consumption is dependent upon Susan's ability to apply gender roles and expectations to her small business. The reaction from their clientele is overwhelmingly positive. Susan, and other entrepreneurs like her, experience social and economic rewards for these efforts. The relationships formed by consumption practices then create a space for women, both owners and participants, to feel good about themselves and the hobby that they are participating in.

## CHAPTER 7:

### Conclusion



*One of the several scrapbook storefronts that I visited. It was typical of the stores that occupied space in small strip malls.*

It is Friday night at 5:30 when I start to unpack my scrapbook supplies from the backseat of my car for an evening at Scrapbook Wishes. When I walk into the store, I am instantly greeted by my fellow hobbyists. Sally, a pleasant woman in her mid forties, asks me if I want to sit at the same table with her friend June and her daughter, Alison. I set down my supplies and chat with them for awhile. After a few minutes I walk to the front of the store to speak with Miranda, the owner. I find her at the cash register where a woman is paying for a large basket of scrapbooking supplies. She jokingly tells Miranda that she hopes that her husband will not find out how much money she spent. After the customer leaves Miranda turns and greets me, "How is school going kid?" she asks. Miranda started calling me kid about a month after I started my field work in her store. She often told me that I looked too young to be working on my doctorate. I reply that I am "hanging in there". We chat as I look for ideas for a scrapbook that I am working on. I start to flip through an idea book that Miranda has sitting on the front counter and when I finally find inspiration for my scrapbook, I return to my table. The evening quickly passes and I spend the night working on my scrapbook, visiting with the other hobbyists and taking discrete field notes. At midnight, I say goodbye to the other women and pack up my supplies. This night was typical of my experience working in the field and it exemplified the phenomena that I discuss in this book.

Together these chapters demonstrate that consumption is a symbiotic relationship between the consumer and the entrepreneur. Every step of the consumption process -- buying and creating the product, being introduced to the hobby, giving the products to family and friends, negotiating the economic costs with family members and interacting with business owners -- demonstrates the complexities of the relationships which influence consumption. These practices of consumption bring meaning and enjoyment to people's lives, which is an

aspect of consumption that sociologists often overlook. The context of scrapbooking, one of the most popular hobbies in the United States, provides an excellent window into the lives of women. Through this lens we find that women create and interpret the events of their lives. While many scholars argue about how the process of consumption manipulates consumers, through scrapbooking we see that the consumption process manipulates hobbyists and we understand how consumers manipulate the consumption process to meet their personal needs.

Collecting the information that led to these findings was enhanced with the use of several methods. In Chapter 2, I reviewed the methods that I used during my project. Participant observation allowed me to understand the scrapbooking phenomenon from the hobbyists' perspective. Learning how to scrapbook, becoming a member of several scrapbooking groups and traveling to scrapbook stores provided me with information that indicated the power of the consumption process on an individual. The information that I gathered during my participant observation also enhanced the interviews that I conducted. As a member of the scrapbooking community, I was able to recruit women to interview and to relate to them on a personal level. Interviews provided the hobbyists with a voice within my research and the impact of this hobby on their lives was clearly discussed within this work because of it. Finally discourse analysis of scrapbooks provided insight into the messages that women craft as part of their scrapbook. Understanding these messages provides an explanation for how women interpret family life and the impact of the industry on how they choose to craft messages about their family. Interpreting these messages also sheds insight into how we choose to remember and craft family events. Each method provided insight into a unique and significant aspect of the scrapbooking phenomenon. Together they allowed the different participants in the project to have a voice and perspective within my project.

In this work I have demonstrated that consumption is dependent on and influences a series of relationships. Chapter 1 provided a history of the scrapbooking hobby and its modern widespread popularity. The history of hobbies and scrapbooking are necessary in providing a context for interpreting the modern impact of the hobby. This chapter also explained how studying scrapbooking was a natural choice for understanding how individuals operate in modern consumption environments. As one of the most popular hobbies in the United States and as a hobby with a huge economic impact, scrapbooking is the perfect example of how modern leisure and consumption have combined to create an environment that is appealing to married, middle class women.

In Chapter 3, I discussed how consumers have relationships with the products that they purchase and the art that they make out of these products. These relationships only enhance the consumption process for consumers and the scrapbooking industry. Using Bourdieu's concept of family discourse reveals how women create scrapbooks that reflect their vision of family life. The industry is aware of the ideologies of family life that women want to display in their scrapbooks and actively uses these ideologies in their products and consumption practices. The end result is that women create a uniform picture of family life that the scrapbooking industry influences. However, women also see that this picture is a unique reflection of their family situation.

Consumption is also dependent on the relationships that consumers have with one another. In Chapter 4, I discussed how consumers have relationships with one another that spark their interest in the hobby and support further education about the products that they can purchase. At times, the products that they purchase can enhance the relationships that they already have with one another or the products can spark interest in family members who would

normally not be attracted to the hobby. Through the example of scrapbooking, we understand how consumption allows women to enhance and participate in family relationships while simultaneously fulfilling their own needs. The act of creating and giving the scrapbook to a friend or family member can have a profound effect on family relationships. In this instance consumption and leisure should not be conceptualized as taking away from the family; most of the hobbyists view their participation as contributing to their experience of family.



*Mom and baby scrapbook together*

Consumption also affects family and friend relationships. In Chapter 5, I examined how women actively hide the cost of the hobby from their husbands. The compulsion to buy products is supported through industry ideologies of addiction and the understanding that what women are doing in creating the scrapbook is for the benefit of their family. The hobby becomes a field for the exercise of marital power dynamics where women use purchasing power as an equalizer for



the latent power that men have in marriage. Women's consumption habits then, demonstrate how women negotiate unequal balances of power and exert their own marital power. The scrapbooking industry is aware of these power differentials and enables women's spending habits through different strategies.

In Chapter 6, I explained how female business owners use gender expectations and relationships to enhance their businesses. Through imitating reproductive labor, nurturing the clientele and providing emotional comfort to their clientele, store owners enhance their business transforming it from an arena that focuses on the exchange of material goods to a service oriented business. Consciously using gender norms and expectations provides women with a dimension of the consumption experience that is often overlooked in studies of women and business. The practices of consumption encompass and exploit gender roles and expectations for the consumer and the seller.

These findings provide further insight into many important theories of gender, family and consumption. In Chapter 3 Bourdieu's concept of family discourse provided a framework for understanding how the family is defined by its members. My findings illustrate how other institutions, notably idealistic concepts of the family and the scrapbooking industry, influence women to craft messages about family that embrace positive definitions of the family. Through this analysis of family discourse, it is also apparent that women negotiate and manipulate these messages about family and they are fully aware of their role in this construction. Therefore these findings contribute to an understanding of the process that hobbyists encounter when they negotiate and manipulate ideas about family life in family discourse.

In Chapter 4 I used DiLeonardo's concept of kin work to explore how women build and maintain family and friendship relationships within their consumption and leisure practices.

Previously, kin work demonstrated the large amount of physical and emotional labor that women participate in while they maintain and establish family relationships. My findings also illustrate how women use kin work as a source of personal fulfillment and power. Consumption and leisure practices are essential in this aspect of kin work. Kin work then, is a gender role that women enact that is dependent on the cooperation of other social institutions. Understanding these gender roles and institutions, provides a better understanding of postmodern family experiences.

In Chapter 5, I applied theories of marital power to the spending habits of hobbyists. What I discovered was that this group of women was highly adept at disguising the amount of money that they were spending on the hobby from their husbands. I also found that this was part of their resistance to the power that men have within marriage. While theories of marital power account for much of the dissemination of power between husbands and wives, they often overlook how individuals negotiate this power. They also do not account for how women may resist these forms of power.

In Chapter 6, I used West and Zimmerman's theory of doing gender, to demonstrate how entrepreneurs seamlessly integrate their role as businesswomen into the store. I found their practices of gender were beneficial to the store. The pervasive nature of gender that West and Zimmerman find is reinforced in the business practices of these female entrepreneurs. This illustrates how our gender expectations play into our experiences of leisure and consumption. These hobbyists look for more than just material goods when they participate in this hobby, they are also looking for a service that is specifically female oriented. Understanding why hobbyists look for this female oriented service provides some of the explanation for why scrapbooking is a gender segregated activity.

This examination of the scrapbooking industry could be enhanced on several levels. The first is including the family networks in the interviews on the effects of the consumption practices of the hobbyists. While women are the primary participants in this hobby, husbands, children, friends and other family members experienced the affects of hobbyists' participation. Notably husband's views and experiences should be included in the analysis of marital power and kin work. Providing husbands' with a voice in this study allows for a better context for interpreting gender roles and inequalities in family life. Interviewing men also provides an understanding of why this hobby only appears to attract women, therefore providing a better context of the construction of gender roles in this hobby. Family members and friends should be interviewed when scrapbooks are given as gifts, in order to examine the impact of the gift as a tool of performing relationship maintenance through kin work. While the lack of interviews of husbands, family members and friends does not negate the findings of this work, the interviews would provide an overall context for interpreting gender and family life in the context of consumption.

The experiences of women of color also need to be studied in the context of consumption. One of the women of color whom I interviewed indicated that she had a harder time entering the scrapbooking community and she felt that this was due to the informal segregation of crop sessions. She indicated that she was not comfortable in a crop session until she attended one with another friend of color. The experiences of these women indicate that further research should expand on how discrimination affects the consumption process for hobbyists. This woman's difficulty entering the community exemplifies a problem with the scope of the research on scrapbooking in my community. This area is predominately white and middle class, therefore, the hobbyists are going to be white and middle class. More research needs to be conducted on

racially segregated scrapbooking groups and how they carry out this informal segregation. For groups that are racially integrated, research needs to examine how women of color experience the hobby.

The economic aspects of these businesses also needed some attention in this work. I characterized the businesses as successful due to how the owners described the growth and success of the business. However upon further reflection on this question I found that these business owners could have different definitions of what a successful business entailed. Therefore, analyzing the numerical figures from these businesses would provide more insight into exactly how lucrative these businesses are. Five years after I started my field research, the scrapbooking industry is experiencing a decline in the number of small businesses that sell scrapbooking materials. There are several reasons why this may be true: the growth of corporate scrapbooking store chains, the growth of hobby stores carrying a larger variety of scrapbooking supplies, the inexperience of entrepreneurs' business decisions (e.g. investing too much money back into the business, poor decisions with the amount and type of inventory) and hobbyists waning interest. Further research into the hobby could provide insight into whether or not this scrapbooking recession is present and the factors that led to it.

Another area that needs further exploration is an examination of the class status of female participants. When I interviewed women I used their occupations or their husband's occupations to identify their class status. I was confident in using this as an accurate indicator because most of the women who participate in scrapbooking, in part because of the costs associated with the hobby, were middle-class. I choose this method of identifying women's class status, as opposed to asking them their class status, because of the belief that Americans have a poor concept of their class status. Now I realize that I could have asked them their household income, their

occupation and their husband's occupation in order to reach a better understanding of their class status.

Despite these limitations, this work provides an analysis of consumption, gender and leisure that illuminates areas and ideas that scholars have previously overlooked. The impact of scrapbooking on the lives of women is clearly documented. Through this work the impact of the hobby on the women who participate in it and the role of the entrepreneur in consumption practices of scrapbooking is apparent. The limitations do not change or impact the importance of the findings in this project, instead the limitations illustrate lines of research that scholars should pursue in the future. Understanding the power of family relationships and their interaction with consumption practices provides scholars with a way of examining consumption that demonstrates the power of consumption in daily life. Also understanding the impact of how racial segregation affects women of color who are hobbyists provides insight into the racial dynamics of leisure and consumption.

Sociologists need to study consumption and leisure in order to expand on our understanding of how consumption changes or exploits gender roles and relationships. Sociologists also need to understand and study consumption from multiple perspectives. We need to analyze the products for their underlying ideologies but we also need to understand how consumers interpret those ideologies and the extent that those ideologies influence buying habits. We need to explore how the product, consumer and industry relate to one another and the implications of those relationships to modern capitalism. When I think of the women who I met in the church basement, Brenda who edited out her ex brother-in-law out of her scrapbook, Theresa and Shirley the mother-daughter duo who always scrapbook with each other, Maxine who disguises how she pays for her supplies, and Susan the dedicated business owner, I realize

how paramount scrapbooking is in the lives of these women. As leisure and consumption habits change over time for hobbyists and entrepreneurs, so will the leisure, consumption and relationship experiences of these women.

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## APPENDIX A

### List of questions for business owners and employees

1. What is your age?
2. What is your sex?
3. What is your marital status?
4. Do you have any children?
5. What is your educational background?
6. What jobs did you have before you started working in this field?
7. How did you get introduced into this hobby?
8. When did you become interested in selling scrapbook materials?
9. What do you like about the scrapbooking industry? (if applicable name the specific company that they work for)
10. What is your best experience with a customer?
11. Why is it special to you?
12. What have you learned about business since you have been selling scrapbooking supplies?
13. If someone wanted to start working in scrapbooking, what advice to you have for them?
14. What scrapbooking company do you admire?
15. What is it about this company that makes it special?
16. How do you manage your work responsibilities and your family responsibilities?
17. What does your family say about scrapbooking?
18. Do you travel to large crop sessions and conventions?
19. What do you like about them?
20. What aspect of your job do you enjoy the most?

- 21. Is there someone in the scrapbooking industry that you admire?
- 22. Advertising?
- 23. Do you think that being a woman helps you in this business?
- 24. Is there anything that you want to add that I may have left out?



## APPENDIX B

### Questions for Community Members

1. What is your age?
2. What is your sex?
3. What is your marital status?
4. Do you have any children?
5. Do you have an occupation?
6. How do you define your racial/ethnic background?
7. How were you introduced to this hobby?
8. How long have you been scrapbooking?
9. Do you scrapbook alone or in groups?
10. Which do you prefer?
10. A. Who takes care of your children when you scrapbook?
11. How regularly do you scrapbook?
11. A. How much do you spend on scrapbooking?
11. B. What does your partner think about how much you spend?
12. Have you ever participated in Creative Memories parties?
13. What did you think of this experience?
14. Have you ever seen men scrapbook?
15. What did you think of this?
16. What are the themes of your scrapbooks?
17. How are the photographs ordered?
18. What do you think the scrapbooks say about your life?

19. What do you think the scrapbooks say about the people in your life?
20. Have you ever made a scrapbook as a gift?
21. How did you feel about this experience?
22. What was the reaction of the person who received the scrapbook?
23. What keeps you interested in scrapbooking?
24. What do your family and friends think of this hobby?
25. If a stranger looked through your scrapbook what impression would they have of your life?
26. Is there anything that you would like to discuss about scrapbooking that you feel I have not addressed?

**CURRICULUM VITA**  
**HEATHER ANN DOWNS**

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**DISSERTATION: Crafting Culture: Scrapbooking and the Lives of Women**

**Committee Chair: Gillian Stevens**

**Committee: Pat Gill, Catherine Kenney, Winifred Poster**

My dissertation examines the process of consumption and how women's relationships with business owners, with other women and with the products that they purchase, enhance commercial activity. Specifically I observe the scrapbooking industry and how it utilizes ideologies of family and femininity to engage women's participation in the hobby. Scholars have analyzed women's organizations and businesses, women's relationships, and the meaning of domestic objects, but they have not tied these components into the larger process of consumption. In my chapter on small business owners, I explore how women experience the contradictory qualities of doing gender publicly, of seamlessly integrating traditional femininity into the business world. In the chapter on the hobbyists, I analyze how important the hobbyists' relationships are with one another in engendering their interest in the hobby. In the chapter on scrapbooks, I examine how the product and women's interpretations of it, sustain enthusiasts' participation in the hobby. Using Bourdieu's theory of family discourse, I explain how the scrapbook presents an idealized version of family life that women are consciously creating through their participation in the hobby. Together these chapters discuss the process of consumption where the individuals and the institution are highly interdependent.

**EDUCATION:**

University of Illinois  
Urbana-Champaign

Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology  
August 2006

University of Illinois  
Urbana-Champaign

Master of Arts in Speech Communication,  
May 2000  
Interpersonal Communication

Loyola University  
Chicago, Illinois

Bachelor of Arts in Communication, January 1998  
Minor in Women's Studies  
Magna cum Laude

Loyola University Rome Center  
Rome, Italy

Language and culture study, Fall 1996

## **PUBLICATIONS**

Stevens, Gillian and Heather Downs. 2006. "Diversity," *Blackwell Encyclopedia of Sociology*. Edited by G. Ritzer. Cambridge: Blackwell.

## **MANUSCRIPTS CURRENTLY UNDER REVIEW**

Downs, Heather. "I do have to show you how to uninvite someone from your pictures": Family Discourse and Scrapbooking .

## **UNIVERSITY APPOINTMENTS:**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Visiting Assistant Professor<br>Fall 2006-Spring 2007 | Department of Sociology<br>University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign                               |
| Instructor<br>Fall 2003 – Spring 2006                 | Department of Sociology<br>University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign                               |
| Graduate Assistant<br>Spring 2003                     | Department of Sociology<br>University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign                               |
| Research Assistant<br>Spring - Summer 2002            | Department of Human Development and<br>Family Studies<br>University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign |
| Teaching Assistant<br>Fall 2002                       | Department of Women's Studies<br>University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign                         |
| Teaching Assistant<br>2002 - 2003                     | Institute of Communications Research<br>University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign                  |
| Teaching Assistant<br>1998 - 2000, 2001 - 2002        | Department of Speech Communication<br>University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign                    |
| Visiting Teaching Associate<br>2000 - 2001            | Department of Speech Communication<br>University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign                    |

## **AWARDS:**

University of Illinois Women's Studies Grant  
Included on the "Incomplete List of Instructors Ranked as Excellent by Their Students"  
1998 – 2006 at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign  
Inducted into Phi Beta Kappa, May 1998  
Inducted into Lambda Pi Eta, May 1997  
Loyola University Presidential Scholar 1994 – 1998  
Nominated for Outstanding Senior Communication Major at Loyola University, Chicago 1997  
Loyola University Dean's List 1994 – 1998

## CONFERENCE PAPERS AND PRESENTATIONS

Downs, Heather Ann. 2004. ““You have to treat it like a child”: Scrapbooking and Female Entrepreneurship.” Paper presented at the University of Illinois’ Department of Sociology’s Seminar Speaker Series.

Downs, Heather Ann. 2003. Respondent to panel on Feminism and Feminist Theory. Presented at the Graduate Symposium on Women’s and Gender History, March 2003 at the University of Illinois at Urbana - Champaign.

Downs, Heather Ann. 2002. “Not Your Mother’s *Bewitched*.” Paper presented at the National Communication Association annual conference, New Orleans, LA.

Downs, Heather Ann. 2002. “Not Your Mother’s *Bewitched*.” Paper presented at the Graduate Symposium on Women’s and Gender History, March 2002 at the University of Illinois at Urbana - Champaign.

Rintamaki, Lance Spencer, McDermott, Virginia, Downs, Heather Ann., Krugh, Andrew C. and Goldsmith, Daena J. 2000. “Sex Differences in Interruptions in Conversations of Close Relational Partners.” Paper presented at the National Communication Association annual conference, Seattle, WA.

Downs, Heather Ann. 2000. “Not Your Mother’s *Bewitched*.” Paper presented at the International Communication Association annual conference, Acapulco, Mexico.

## MEMBERSHIPS

American Sociological Association  
Sociologists for Women in Society

## TEACHING EXPERIENCE:

### Sociology 373: Social Stratification

This course focused on issues of inequality within the United States with emphasis on the class system.

### Sociology 225: Race and Ethnicity

This course focused on issues surrounding race and ethnicity in the contemporary United States.

### Sociology 221: Women in the Transnational Perspective

This course focused on issues surrounding women, children and globalization.

Sociology 200: Introduction to Social Theory

An introduction into classical and contemporary theories of Sociology.

Women's Studies 111: Introduction to Studies in Women, Gender, and Sexualities

This large lecture course covers second and third wave feminist theories.

Women's Studies 199: Women in Film

This course examined the role of women in several different genres of film.

Communication 221: Film Theory and Interpretation

This large lecture course covers a variety of film theories related to a specific genre including the genres of teen "slasher" films and gangster films.

Speech Communication 221: Persuasion

A course which presents strategies to overcoming obstacles in creating persuasive messages. The final project included the option of persuading individuals to donate money to the Center for Women in Transition and A Woman's Place. Students from the fall 2000 class raised close to \$1,200 for the program.

Speech Communication 223: Argumentation: Theory and Practice

Course covers theories in critical thinking, argumentation theory, and introductory debate.

Speech Communication 101: Introduction to Public Speaking

An introductory course on public speaking which covers the fundamentals of performing and writing speeches.

**DEPARTMENTAL SERVICE**

Graduate Student Advisory Committee 2003-2005

The committee acted as a liaison between graduate students and the faculty. My primary responsibility included enhancing the professional development of graduate students by instituting a graduate student seminar series.

Curriculum Committee 2004-2005

I served on a committee that worked to enhance the course offerings for undergraduate and graduate students. I was responsible for bringing graduate students' ideas and concerns about the curriculum to the faculty.

**References:**

Dr. Gillian Stevens:

*Professor*

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Associate Professor  
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Dr. Catherine Kenney:

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Dr. Winifred Poster:

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## **COMMUNITY SERVICE**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Career Mentor<br/>2005-2006</b>          | Volunteered with high school juniors and seniors who are interested in majoring or minoring in Sociology  |
| <b>Shelter Project<br/>Fall 2000 - 2001</b> | Volunteered with the Champaign Police D.A.R.E. unit.<br>Raised money for Christmas gifts for children residing in homeless shelters. Responsibilities included aiding students in raising money for the project and program planning. |
| <b>Kid's Place<br/>1995-1996</b>            | Volunteered with inner city children at an after school program.<br>Responsibilities included tutoring children from ages 6-15, organizing activities, and directing winter and spring programs.                                      |